The Delhi College

Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1857

Edited by

Margrit Pernau

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Preface

It is impossible to speak of the Delhi College and not mention the man who has done more over the years than any other person to keep the spirit of its intellectual tradition alive and to convince the authorities to preserve its beautiful buildings from crumbling: Professor Yunus Jaffery.

No one who has experienced it will ever forget the unfailing courtesy with which he treated his visitors to tea and the large stores of his knowledge. He would truly have deserved a felicitation volume for his seventy-fifth birthday in 2005, if it were not for one problem: the fields of his interests and scholarship, to which he guided his 'academic family' from all over the world, were just too wide! No one could have convinced a publisher to bring out a volume covering the centuries from the early Muslim rulers of Delhi almost to the present, extending over Persia and the whole of Hindustan, and encompassing not only art and architecture, but history, linguistics, literature, philosophy, and mysticism,

I was searching for a solution to this dilemma when it occurred to me that a book on the Delhi College, on the institution he has lived for and that he cherishes more than his own person, would be the right way not only to acknowledge, but to carry on his life-work. I know that with his characteristic modesty Professor Jaffery would have preferred to remain unnamed and let all the attention fall on the college alone, but this was a wish I for once was not inclined to grant him.

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Margrit Pernau

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Introduction
Entangled Translations[1]
The History of the Delhi College

Margrit Pernau

More than many other institutions, the Delhi College still evokes a strong emotive reaction. It has come to symbolize an encounter between British and Indo-Muslim culture through the medium of Urdu. Its heroes were men like Master Ram Chandra, the science teacher and Maulawi Zaka Ullah, the historian and textbook writer, who fearlessly set out to discover new knowledge and thus reinvigorated their own culture, guided and helped by a colonial power which was not yet intent on replacing Oriental languages with English. This belief in the profound compatibility of all cultures and hence in a cultural encounter free from the exercise of power, and the experience of humiliation, which Charles Freer Andrews, the British missionary who turned into a close collaborator and friend of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, expressed so movingly,[2] may be indispensable as a value

1 This article forms part of my larger research project on 'Multiple Identities: The Muslim Community at Shahjahanabad in the Nineteenth Century', which is supported by the Volkswagen Foundation and the University of Erfurt.

2 C.F. Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, reprint with introductions by Mushirul Hasan and Margrit Pernau, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003.

with which to shape the future. The historic Delhi College, however, was a much more contested site than the collective memory will have it.

Thus, if the one danger to avoid is an overemphasis on the harmony of the dialogue between cultures, the almost exclusive interest historiography has taken in recent time in the colonial construction of knowledge also fails to capture the complex interactions which took place in and around the Delhi College. The attention to the interrelation between knowledge and the exercise of power, to which Edward Said's seminal work[3] has directed historians, remains important to this day. Cultural encounter in nineteenth-century north India was inscribed into the colonial situation. Knowledge and power are intimately related and have to be investigated together. However, much as Said bemoans the way Western scholarship has been unilaterally defining the Orient, in the final result his work does not seem to free research from this domination, but on the contrary tends to strangely reinforce it. As long as research limits itself to the analysis of colonial discourse, it tends to reproduce it at another level: once again, historical agency is limited to the British, as if they were the only ones to generate the impulses for change worth exploring.[4] The fact that these same impulses, which colonial historiography investigated for their modernizing and salvaging potential, are now looked at for their nefarious consequences, perhaps does not make too much of a difference. Once again the active colonial universe is matched with an Orient, to which still inhere many of the familiar qualities, above all, passivity and homogeneity. Rulers and ruled, Occident and Orient, and their respective cultures and discourses remain as separate and impermeable as ever—in spite of his original intention, the categories Edward Said offers do not seem to permit the dissolution of that duality.

Instead of either denying or overemphasizing boundaries between cultures, it seems more promising to concentrate on the phenomenon of the boundaries themselves, their disputed discursive formation, as also the multiple ways in which they are crossed and transgressed from both sides. It shall be suggested here that

3 Edward S. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London, Penguin, 1995.

4 Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 11.

the concept of translation can provide the conceptual tool with which to explore this in-between of cultures.[5]

Recent studies emphasize that translation should no longer be seen as the attempt to carry the same meaning from one language or one culture to another, its success being contingent to the exact reproduction of the original meaning. Instead, every translation involves a creative process. This encompasses, on the one hand, the unavoidable transformation of the meaning—even apparently similar words carry the impact of a different linguistic field and hence evoke different notions. On the other hand, the language into which a text or notion is translated, is itself transformed by the act of translation, through either the formation of new or the alteration of existing discourses, which are needed to encompass the new meanings. Understanding the working of translations thus needs as much attention to the translators and the contexts in which they are acting as to the texts themselves—translation is not an activity taking place in the void; it is embedded in social action. Therefore the process of translation, to an even lesser extent than dialogue, can be considered apart from the investigation of power relations.

Translation stood at the centre of the endeavours of the Delhi College. This is true not only of the establishment of the Vernacular Translation Society and the translation of textbooks which involved everyone from the principal to the students—the very establishment of the college can be read as an attempt to translate British culture and scholarship for an Indian audience. Nevertheless, the Delhi College translators were not just tools in the hands of the colonial power. Their translations show their cultural assumptions, their selections and choices, and their reinterpretation of the British texts they imported into the Urdu language—they, too, did have an agenda of change, which they wanted to induce through translation. However, this does not mean their activities were not deeply marked by the colonial situation, which permeated every stage of

5 For the German discussion, on which these reflections draw, see Doris Bachmann-Medick (ed.), *Übersetzung als Repräsentation fremder Kulturen* [Translation as representation of other cultures], Berlin, Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1997; Beate Hammerschmid and Hermann Krapoth (eds), *Übersetzung als Kultureller Prozeß. Rezeption, Perzeption und Konstruktion des Fremden* [Translation as Cultural Process: Reception, Perception, and Construction of the Other], Berlin, Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1998; Joachim Renn, Jürgen Straub, and Shingo Shimada (eds), *Übersetzung als Medium des Kulturverstehens und Sozialer Integration*, [Translation as a Medium for Understanding Culture and for Social Integration], Frankfurt, Campus, 2002.

the translation, from the selection of the texts and concepts to be translated to the Urdu speakers' reading of the British texts to the transformation they induced in the Urdu language.

If every translation in itself already constitutes a crossing and blurring of boundaries, and an entanglement of cultures, the situation in the early nineteenth century was even more complex. The Delhi College did not start its work in a sphere free of translation, but built on a multitude of translations, as the British were trying to make sense of the country they had conquered and to render its culture 'readable'. On the inverse we see the attempt of the conquered to decipher the meaning of their conqueror's behaviour and to reinterpret it within their own language and cultural framework.

Though the present book focuses on translation, it does not do so in the linguistic sense of the term. Instead it brings into view the translators themselves, those who hoped for a transformation of India and of their relation with the colonial power through a profound immersion in Western culture, but also those who resisted these translations and attempted to use the setting provided by the British for objectives of their own. The institutional history of what was first the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din and later, the Delhi College is designed to provide the framework for this interpretation.

The Madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din

In the literal as well as the figurative sense, the Delhi College built upon the earlier foundations of the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din. The early history of this institution remains vague and full of contradictory information. The British sources, quoted by the standard histories of the Delhi College, hold that it was founded in 1792 as a traditional madrasa by Nawab Ghaziu'd-Din II, the son of Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I, founder of the Haidarabad State in the Deccan.[6] As, however, the nawab died in 1751/52, this date seems open to questioning.

The crucial information is to be found in the *malfuzat* (collections of sayings of a Sufi and anecdotes of his life) of Maulana Fakhru'd-

6 'Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College* (reprint), Delhi, Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu (Hind), 1989, p. 12, citing the Bengal and Agra Annual Guide and Gazetteer of 1841; the same date is given by Malik Ram, *Qadim Dihli College*, Delhi, Maktaba Jamia, 1970, p. 18, who, however, holds, that at least the grave and the mosque date from the time of Nawab Ghaziu'd-Din I, the grandfather of Nawab Ghaziu'd-Din II.

Din, the famous Sufi saint of the eighteenth century. Describing his spiritual guide's visit to Delhi, the biographer writes:

> Briefly, the Maulana bestowed grace on the City of Delhi by his steps. And in [the residential quarter of] Katrah Phulel, where he settled for a short while, he chose to reside in the *madrasa*, which was the *madrasa* that the father of this unworthy slave [the author] had built. It was located outside of Ajmeri Darwaza and it was there that he occupied himself with teaching. After the uncle of this unworthy slave, his father, who was appointed by the royal threshold to be the Governor of the Deccan, also came to make the pilgrimage of the shrine of Mahbub Illahi [Nizamu'd-Din Auliya], and this slave also came with him.[7]

The author of this text is given as Ghaziu'd-Din 'Nizam', whom the poetical *tazkiras* (biographical dictionary) identify as Nawab Imadu'l-Mulk Ghaziu'd-Din Bahadur, the son of Shahabu'd-Din Firuz Jang, Ghaziu'd-Din II, and the grandson of Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I, the founder of Haidarabad.[8] Going by this nearly contemporary source, we may identify Ghaziu'd-Din II as the founder of the madrasa. Most probably, he built on foundations laid by his grandfather, Ghaziu'd-Din I, who in his lifetime chose the site for his grave due to its proximity to the burial place of his spiritual guide Shah Wajihu'd-Din[9] and built the mosque which still forms the centre of what is today the Anglo-Arabic School.[10] As he died in 1710, this gives us a fairly precise idea of the time period in which the madrasa was planned and finished. Its architecture, Ebba Koch points out in her piece, places it at once at the confluence

7 *Malfuzat o Halat-e Shah Fakhr Dihlavi*, Urdu translation and edition of the Persian *Fakhr al talibin o manaqab Fakhria* by Mir Nazr 'Ali Dard Kakori, Karachi, Sultan Academy, 1961, p. 221, my translation (M.P.).

8 Karimu'd-Din, *Tabaqat-e Sho'ara-e Hind* (reprint), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy, 1983, pp. 121–4, 292–3; Mustafa Khan Shefta, *Gulshan-e Bekhar*, (edited and translated to Urdu by Hamida Khatun), Delhi, National Council for the Promotion of Urdu, 1998, pp. 292–3; Abu'l Qasim Mir Qudrat Ullah, *Majmu'a-e naghz, ya'ni tazkira-e sho'ara-e Urdu*, Delhi, National Academy, 1973, pp. 277–80. Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire de la littérature Hindouie et Hindoustanie*, Paris, Adolphe Labitte, 1870, vol. 2, pp. 476–7, amalgamates the biographies of Ghaziu'd-Din II and Ghaziu'd-Din III.

9 Probably identical with the grandfather of Shah Wali Ullah, see Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1983, p. 250. This would point to links not only to the Chishti, but also to the Naqshbandi tradition—if a disentanglement of traditions is at all probable at a time when multiple initiations were the rule rather than the exception.

10 Muhammad Mahbub Junaidi, *Hayat-e Asif*, Hyderabad, 1943, Ghalib Institute, p. 72.

of the tradition of the South Asian madrasas and Central Asian influences and makes it an outstanding example of later Mughal building art. Though situated at the margins of the city, the plans show that from the time of its foundation the madrasa was intended as an important centre of learning, providing the space (if we go by the number of *hujras* i.e. room) for at least two dozen teachers and a corresponding number of students.

On the strength of the evidence from the malfuzat of Maulana Fakhru'd-Din quoted above, we may also conclude that the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din and the madrasa of Fakhru'd-Din were one and the same.[11] This in turn permits us to guess the kind of teaching which went on in this period. Fakhru'd-Din was related to the Chishti tradition of Kalim Ullah Shahjahanabadi (1650–1729) through his father, Nizamu'd-Din (1650–1730), who was Kalim Ullah's first successor. Fakhru'd-Din was born in 1714/15. He is considered as the renewer (*mujaddid*) of the Chishti order and linked to the revival of its influence in Punjab and Sindh. Although the musical sessions (*sama'*) that were regular features at his *khanqah* (religious establishment for holy men) drew the opposition of the Afghans of Delhi—who denied that ecstasy induced by music was legitimate within the Islamic tradition[12]—he had many pupils and disciples among the nobles and even counted the emperor and several members of the royal family among his disciples. His Chishti affiliations make it probable that the teachings at the madrasa, if they were formalized in any way, were influenced by the curriculum of the *dars-e Nizami*.[13]

After Maulana Fakhru'd-Din's death, his son Qutbu'd-Din went to the Deccan, but was urged to return to Delhi by Shah Akbar II in 1807.[14] His son, popularly known as Kale Mian, was one of the

11 See also Mirza Sangin Beg, *Sairu'l-Manazil*, edited and translated to Urdu by Sharif Husain Qasimi, Delhi, Ghalib Institute, 1982, p. 208, who mentions that the madrasa of Fakhru'd-Din was situated next to the wholesale coal market, which formerly was located near the New Delhi Railway Station, right next to the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan (information, Yunus Jaffery).

12 Rizvi, p. 306.

13 The curriculum, rationalizing the teachings of the classical books, developed in Lakhnau in 18th century, with an emphasis on the rational sciences (*ma'qulat*). For details see Jamal Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur in Nordindien: Entwicklungsgeschcihte und Tendenzen am Beispiel von Lucknow*, Leiden, Brill, 1997. An English translation of this work is forthcoming.

14 Foreign Consultations, 1.9.1807/83–4, National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi.

most influential Sufis of his time, although little information survives on his teachings.[15] Neither of these two seems to have taught at the madrasa, which rapidly declined and in 1824 accommodated only nine students, a pale reflection of its heyday.[16]

Delhi Renaissance: With or Without the British?

Like C.F. Andrews, scholars, too, for a long time have taken it for granted that any renaissance which might have taken place in Delhi—or in north India for that matter—would have been the result of the challenge of English education and literature and the response these triggered off in 'Oriental' scholarship. However, it might be worthwhile to enlarge the scope of enquiry and look at the indigenous roots of this rènaissance in the eighteenth céntury.[17]

Two institutions at this time challenged the domination of the tradition of the Firangi Mahal school in Lucknow and the rationalist sciences of which it had become the centre. Without denying the importance of philosophy and logic, Shah Wali Ullah (1703–62), the founder of the madrasa of Rahimiyya in Delhi, held that human reason (*aql*) in itself was an insufficient tool for reaching the divine truth and consequently laid greater importance on the study of revelation, on the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet in his teachings. Once these were accepted as the foundation, Shah Wali Ullah proceeded to rationalize both the exegesis and the everyday life of his followers. With Max Weber one might argue that the question what is being rationalized, and with which results for the organization of the behaviour of the actors, is at least as important as the question whether a rationalization takes place at all. A rationalization of the theological fundaments of a religion can at times be compatible with the less rational day-to-day behaviour of the believers and vice versa.[18]

15 Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, '1857 se Pahle ki Dihli: "Ulama o Mashaikh ka Ijtima"', in Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Tarikhi Maqalat*, Delhi, 1966, pp. 210–57.

16 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, p. 13.

17 Jamal Malik, 'Encounter and Appropriation in the Context of Modern South Asian History', in Jamal Malik (ed.), *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History, 1760–1860*, Leiden, Brill, 2000.

18 See for instance the space which scholasticism provided for popular religiosity in Europe as compared to the rationalization of the life-world induced by the Calvinist belief in God's arbitrary decision on salvation or damnation.

In Shah Wali Ullah's case, this included the necessity of direct and individual access to the scriptures, if not for everyone, then for as many of the educated as possible. The emphasis on the promotion of the vernacular languages as a means of learning, first of Persian, in the next generation already of Urdu, found its expression in the translations of the sacred texts by Shah Wali Ullah and his sons. Thus, decades before the foundation of the Delhi College, translation was already being used as a way to induce changes—it transformed the language and the way canonic texts were regarded.[19]

This emphasis on the divine revelation and the law in turn spun off an effort to rationalize the everyday life of each believer, to make him less dependent on the spiritual powers and the intercession of the saints, and to stress his individual responsibility for his own salvation as well as for the fate of the community. Hereby the education of the individual gained an importance it never had before—both for his own moral perfection as also for the survival of the Islamic character of the community. This transformation, which has alternatively been called the 'protestantization' of Islam or the development of Islamic pietism, was thus well on its way before the advent of the British, though it afterwards certainly received a further impetus from there.

Shah Wali Ullah in many ways still acted within the parameters of a Sufi order. His sons, foremost among them Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz and Shah 'Abdu'l-Qadir, extended their teaching network over the whole of north India and drew increasingly large numbers of students to their school.[20] In order to disperse their message through fatwas and pamphlets, they soon started making use of the print media.[21]

19 Marc Gaborieau, 'Late Persian, Early Urdu: The Case of Wahhabi Literature, 1818–1857', in Françoise 'Nalini' Delvoye, *Confluence of Cultures: French Contribution to Indo-Persian Studies*, Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 1994.

20 For a wealth of information on the madrasa of Rahimiyya and its networks see Saiyid Muhammad Mian, *'Ulama-e Hind ka shandar mazi*, vol. II, Delhi, 1985 (reprint of the Lahore edition) and 'Atau'r-Rahman Oasimi, *Alwa 'us-Sanadid*, Delhi, Maulana Azad Academy, 1991, though both tend to interpret the earlier phase of the madrasa in the light of the militant stand of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid, which was the product of a later generation.

21 Francis Robinson, 'Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia', in Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 66–104.

In this first phase their relation to the British does not seem to have been marked by antagonism. The British error in placing the responsibility for a riot in 1807 on Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz's brother Shah Rafi'u'd-Din and exiling him from the city, was quickly rectified, once they realized the outstanding position the family occupied in Delhi, and they did their utmost to placate them.[22] Apparently, this appeasement was successful, for though Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz ruled at different instances that India had become a *daru'l-harb*—an abode of war—due to the government having passed into the hands of non-believers, he was careful to qualify this daru'l-harb as one which necessitated neither emigration nor the taking up of arms. Equally, he gave very cautious answers on the permissibility for Muslims of learning the English language and taking up service with the colonial masters, deeming these issues as religiously neutral, as long as they did not lead to a loss of the faith or to actions harmful to fellow Muslims.[23]

Much more distant from the British rulers was the second institution which promoted the Islamic renewal and fed into the Renaissance from the eighteenth century onwards, the khanqah of Mirza Jan-e Janan, a Naqshbandi from the *silsila* (line of succession) of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, the great reformer of Akbar's time. Even more than Shah Wali Ullah, it was from the re-interpretation of the Sufi traditions that Mirza Jan-e Janan and his followers drew inspiration for their piety. While their ultimate aim most emphatically remained reaching God, the means was no longer to distance oneself from a world perceived as sinful. On the contrary, salvation was only deemed possible through action in the world, while keeping an inner distance from its corrupting power. The nearer the seeker was drawing to God, the more he was called to assume the leadership of the community and to guide his fellow-believers to righteous behaviour. This induced a willingness to participate in the realm of politics and worldly affairs, but

22 Foreign Political Consultations (=FPC), 21.5.1807/9–18; FPC 28.5.1807/32; FPC 4.6.1807/17–22. FPC 28.9.1807/18–19. FPC 23.7.1807/27.

23 Muhammad Khalid Masud, 'The World of Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz (1746–1824)', in Malik, *Mutual Encounters*, pp. 298–315, taking up older arguments of Mushiru'l Haqq; for the texts of the fatwas see Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz, *Fatawa-e 'Azizi* (translated and edited by Muhammad Shafi), 2 vols; on Daru'l-Harb, vol. 1, pp. 27–30, pp. 52–3, pp. 66–8, pp. 226–9; on taking up service with the British and learning English, vol. 1, pp. 182–5.

at the same time made it mandatory to keep a distance from the powers of the world—even if they were already Muslims, more so if they were British.[24] When Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz delivered his fatwa on the permissibility of seeking employment under the East India Company, Shah Ghulam 'Ali, the successor of Mirza Jan-e Janan, in a letter implored him to reconsider his decision, as knowledge was the glory of mankind, but jobs under the British were inauspicious. Rather than take up a high position among the rich, the true scholar should remain content with a loaf of bread and engage in the remembrance of God, always considering that his next breath might be the last.[25] While this Naqshbandi tradition saw itself most expressly as a renewal of the Muslim tradition, it attempted to do so by the fortification of the community's boundaries against external influences and therefore ruled out participation in any form of translation activity.

It is difficult at the present stage of research to conclude whether Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz or Shah Ghulam 'Ali was a more representative speaker for the Muslim community, as too little is known about the inner life of the many large and countless smaller madrasas of Delhi in the first half of the nineteenth century.[26] What is certain, however, is that the re-interpretation of classical knowledge and endeavours to translate it into an idiom meaningful for the new circumstances had begun well before the British established their political and cultural supremacy over north India in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

British Patronage of Oriental Knowledge: *Contre Coeur et par Raison*?

William Dalrymple, the famous biographer of the *White Mughals*,[27] reminds us in his article not to project back the attitude of later

24 Warren Edward Fusfeld, 'The Shaping of Sufi Leadership in Delhi: The Naqshbaniyya Mujaddidiyya, 1750–1920', PhD dissertation, Pennsylvania, 1981.

25 For the documentation of this debate see Muhammad Ayub Qadri, 'Maulana Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi: Daur-e mulazamat', in Afzal Haqq Qarshi (ed.), *Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi*, Lahore, Al Faizal, 1992, pp. 11–83.

26 Jamal Malik, 'Islamic Institutions and Infrastructure in Shahjahanabad', in Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft (eds), *Shahjahanabad/Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993, pp. 43–65.

27 William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India*, London, Harper Collins, 2002.

British colonialists to their early nineteenth-century counterparts. The British officers in Delhi were much less intent on introducing their own culture into an Indian context, than they were themselves the outcome of an encounter with the East. In the dresses they wore, the women they loved, the children they begot, and the knowledge they imbibed and patronized, the deep affection of this generation for India is shown, before they were slowly replaced by self-righteous utilitarian and evangelical newcomers. This development took off in the 1830s and was sealed with the brutal repression of the revolt of 1857, never to be revived.

However, if the colonial officers' hearts were involved in this encounter with Indo-Persian culture, reason certainly told them not to endanger their fragile hold on the north Indian political situation by an attempt at a civilizing mission.[28] Next to allies, reliable and timely information was crucial to this form of indirect rule. It was precisely this lack of information and the resulting misreading of the situation, which very nearly turned the minor fracas of 1807, mentioned above, into a major legitimation crisis for British rule. The lesson the resident drew was to immediately visit the most respected religious teachers of the city and try to gain admission to their circles. Without at all denying that ghazals and courtesans also held an emotional attraction for individual British, they also provided access to the informational networks of Delhi[29] and cast the foreign rulers in the mould of culturally legitimized rule at a local level. This was the framework in which patronage of Oriental learning, too, has to be read. The question of the respective value and usefulness of Oriental or British education did not enter the picture at this stage.

In 1823, the General Committee for Public Instruction in Calcutta asked the Local Committees in Delhi, Agra, and other north Indian towns to report on the condition of education within their province and to propose measures to enhance the standards. The picture that G.H. Taylor, the secretary of the Delhi Local Committee, drew of conditions in Delhi was quite dismal. Although there were a number of madrasas, the foundation and endowment of educational institutions being perceived as a good deed by pious Muslims, the

28 Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann (eds), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India*, London, Anthem Press, 2004.

29 C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

number of students was very small, when viewed in relation to the inhabitants of the city. Their attendance was irregular and the quality of the teaching low.[30] One might perhaps ask whether Taylor's familiarity with the madrasas and their curriculum was as great as he claimed, all the more so as he did not know any of the classical languages (that is, Arabic and Persian). Nevertheless, as a consequence of his report, the government sanctioned the grant of Rs 600 per month from the General Education Fund for the instruction of Muhammadan youth in Delhi,[31] and the Delhi College could take up teaching in the Ghaziu'd-Din madrasa barely two years later, the grant having been raised by another Rs 400 from the General Fund and Rs 250 from the Local Fund.[32]

However, within a very short time, the venture, which had begun as patronage in the traditional frame of reference, began to be translated into quite a different idiom, owing probably less to the educational debates at Calcutta, which were to take off in earnest only later, and more to the consolidation of British power and the transformation of British rule in north India from diplomacy to administration. At the proposal of Charles Metcalfe, the young, Anglophile resident, and Charles Trevelyan, an English class was added to the college in 1828.[33] Although this was meant as an addition to, not as a substitution of existing ventures, it provoked unrest among the educated classes of the city, both Hindus and Muslims, who were worried that it might be the intention of the government to depart from its policy of patronizing Oriental learning and upholding religious neutrality. This mistrust died down only slowly.

Partly as a countermove to this tendency, partly for personal and religious reasons, the nawab of Awadh, Nawab Fazl 'Ali Khan E'timadu'd-Daula, proposed to establish an Oriental College in Delhi, his native town, and to endow it with the income of a grant of Rs 170,000, invested in the funds of the East India Company. The Company was quick to seize this chance and argued that while Rs 500 a month would not go far for the upkeep of a separate college, this same sum, added to the government funds already

30 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, p. 14.

31 Note on the history of the Delhi College by Colvin, Home Proceeding (=HP), 15.7.1840/7–14, NAI.

32 HP, 15.7.1840/6. HP, 15.7.1840/7–14.

33 See Chap. 8 of this volume by Michael H. Fisher.

available 'would prove of incalculable advantage and widely extend the sphere of usefulness of the Institution already existing.' In return it was proposed to 'perpetuate the memory of so munificent a donation by founding Lectures and Scholarships in his name'.[34]

The nawab agreed to this proposal and in September paid the sum to the government. No sooner had they received the money, than they decided to withdraw a corresponding sum of public money from the Oriental College in order to invest it 'for the formation of a separate Institution on an enlarged scale, devoted to affording tuition in the English language, sciences and literature.'[35] At the same time Taylor's salary as joint principal for both institutions was raised from Rs 175 to Rs 300 and charged entirely to the Oriental section. Thus, the funds available for the study of Persian and Arabic in the end proved less than before the donation. It is not entirely clear when this withdrawal of funds became effective. However, the intention of the Company must have been evident enough to the nawab to request his son-in-law Hamid 'Ali Khan in his testament to supervise the proper application of the grant:

I have hitherto... done nothing which would after death ensure salvation from crimes committed against the God of Life and Death or performed any undertaking which would by its continuance be productive of reward and divine mercy, with exception to this one act of leaving the sum of Rs 170,000 to the College founded by the late Nawab Ghaziooddeen Khan situated in Delhi my native place of residence, solely for the instruction and study of the sciences in Arabic and Persian the sciences of my own Religion and the source of the increase of morality... the profits arising from the above amount will be always appropriated to the expense of the children of respectable persons and of the Professors of the College, in conformity to my above expressed wish, yet in order to guard against any unforeseen causes which may tend to impede the advancement of the College arising from other more important avocations of Government, it will be necessary and proper for my Son/Seyyud Hamid Ulee Khan/in order to secure the motive and intent of this bequest to suggest to Government such means as shall appear to him just and proper, and in failure thereof to apply to Government to establish a separate College and appropriate the profits accruing from the amount deposit to its efficient management in such way as will ensure its stability and the realization of the benefits contemplated.[36]

34 Letter from Stirling (Persian Secretary) to Fraser (Acting Resident), 17.7.1829, quoted in Colvin, Note, HP 15.7.1840/7–14.

35 Stirling, Note, 18.9.1829, quoted in 15.7.1840/7–14.

36 Testament of Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula, 8.1.1830, quoted HP 15.7.1840/7–14, together with the original Persian version.

Shortly afterwards, on 6 April 1830, the nawab died. Hamid 'Ali Khan took up the fight and desperately tried for the next decade to convince the British either to use the money according to the intention of the legatee or to relinquish the sum, so that he could establish a madrasa according to the conditions of the *waqf* (charitable endowment under Islamic law).[37] But what still would have been remotely possible in 1825 was completely unthinkable 10 years later.[38] In the Delhi territory, rule by alliances had been replaced by rule by records—the supporters the British now needed were no longer the commanders of detachments of horses, but those able to wield the pen in their service, no longer nobles, but members of middling groups who hoped to gain social status by serving the British. The arrival of a new generation of British administrators, evangelical and utilitarian, has often been held to have constituted the main reason for the demise of the 'White Mughals' and a new policy of cultural domination. It is certainly true that sensibilities had profoundly changed, but it were the transformed power relations which permitted the colonial power to give way to these new sensibilities and allow them to influence their policy.

The English branch of the Delhi College, now called Delhi Institute, was carried to prominence by this new development. The abolition of Persian as the official language of British rule in India in 1837, matched by the decision of the Delhi Residency to henceforth accept letters and petitions from their Indian allies only in English, made it clear that secure professional opportunities for future generations would depend on a knowledge of English.

> The Head Master concludes from this that the advantages of English Education are now generally appreciated by the Native Community, and he adds that the circumstance of forty Students having obtained situations in Government and Private Establishments, chiefly owing to their knowledge of English must have had some effect in keeping up the number of Pupils.[39]

At the same time, the stipends, which traditionally had been granted to every student of the classical languages at the Delhi College, were greatly reduced, bringing the number of students

37 Letter from Hamid 'Ali Khan to governor general, 18.2.1835, FPC 5.3.1835/220; Letter from Hamid 'Ali Khan to governor general, HP 11.11.1835/11.

38 For the all-India background to this development see the brilliant introduction to Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Muir (eds), *The Great Indian Education Debate*, London, Curzon Press, 1999.

39 Report on the Delhi English College, 1834, HP 24.8.1836/14 A.

down from 279 in 1833 to only 123 in 1838.[40] In combination with the fact that Taylor, the principal of both the branches, does not seem to have been a very capable and energetic supervisor of teachers and students, this led to a situation in which the college fulfilled neither the expectations of traditional scholarship nor imparted knowledge which would be useful in the colonial administration. As Hamid 'Ali Khan explained to the governor general in 1838, 'the Departments of that Institutions are in a very disordered and disorganized state', the teachers 'for the most part composed of men devoid of genius, ability + other acquirements essential to the purpose of Tuition + the proper discharge of the delicate duties of Education', with the result that 10 years after the establishment of the college 'not a single student has attained or finished...even a tolerable education'.[41] Reforms had become inevitable.

Translating British Culture

As referred to above, the first decades of British rule in the Delhi region had seen the partial integration of the colonial officers into the Indo-Persian public sphere. Although power did play a part in this process—unlike the British themselves loved to imagine, they were probably admitted to the *mushairas* (poetical gathering) and *mahfils* (festive assembly) neither for the quality of their poetry nor for the refinement of their manners—what is important in this respect is that the sphere in which public opinion was formed included both British and Indians and it was based on indigenous cultural forms. The last remnants of this situation can still be grasped in the 1837 issue of the first English language newspaper of Delhi, the *Delhi Gazette*. Faced with information on the probable failure of Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar's attempt to claim an enhancement of his pension upto the level promised in the correspondence between his grandfather and the governor general after the conquest of Delhi, the editor wrote, 'we can, as public Journalists, only express our deep regret at the disappointment, which must now be universally felt',[42] and

40 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, pp. 106–7.

41 Letter from Hamid 'Ali Khan to governor general, 17.2.1838, HP 15.7. 1840/4.

42 *Delhi Gazette*, 8 February 1837.

explained shortly afterwards that 'our duty, as well as an inclination, induce us to comment on every improper act of authority'.[43] At this time the *Delhi Gazette* still, as a matter of course, drew at least a part of its information from handwritten Persian newsletters[44] and neither side thought it strange if members of the royal family addressed the public by means of letters to the editor.[45]

As discussed above, this need not be read as a power-free multicultural dialogue, conducted in mutual esteem. However, no matter how the British felt about the relative worth of cultures and religions, imperial necessity made them keep their opinions to their private letters and discussions.[46] However, this changed in the 1840s. As the British population in Delhi, notably the army, increased, they were no longer willing, or able, to integrate with the local population. Once again the *Delhi Gazette* reflects on the change, commenting on an attempt by the king to start a printed newsletter of his own: 'we shall find some very interesting or, at least, if not instructive, amusing details in it',[47] but also voicing in anger that 'it is almost time that some of the tom fooleries of the would be royalty of the Timour dynasty were attempted to be clipped.'[48] It is small wonder that this new *Delhi Gazette* drew the attention of only a few Indian subscribers and that Delhi came to be perceived as one of the most boring north Indian towns by a small British community resolved on communicating only with each other. The less they thought they had to learn from the Orient, the more, however, the colonial officers found to teach.[49] The dwindling patronage for poetic and religious functions was matched by the foundation of associations in the British style, to which carefully chosen 'native gentlemen' were co-opted to organize famine relief, debate on horticultural progress, or inquire into the antiquities of Delhi at the Archaeological Society.

43 Ibid., 12 April 1837.

44 Ibid., 19 April 1837.

45 Ibid., 8 February 1837.

46 Where even a hard-core White Mughal like William Fraser could speak about India as the 'unenlightened part of the Globe', and bemoan the 'ignorance and infatuation of the Millions' who were 'devoid of sensibility, gratitude and moral enjoyment'. Letter to his father, 2 October 1813, Private Papers of W. Fraser, vol. 29.

47 *Delhi Gazette*, 25 August 1841.

48 Ibid., 27 July 1842.

49 Zastoupil and Muir, *The Great Indian Education Debate*, p. 5.

Unlike in Bengal, here the debate on 'Native Education' did not oppose the defenders of Oriental and Western knowledge so much as those who wanted to transmit the values of the West through English and those who claimed that the 'paramount object [should be] to make the improvement and cultivation of the vernacular tongue go hand in hand with the promulgation of the thoughts and ideas, the solidity of reasoning and freedom of enquiry of the European world.'[50] Teaching through Urdu, the argument ran, offered the possibility of impacting the Indian mind to an extent (and at a price!) which English could not even begin to. It was not an appreciation for the beauty of the Urdu language and patronage for Oriental learning that stood at the centre of the reform of the Delhi College, but the belief that by inducing scholars to prepare translations, printing them, and introducing them into the schools, they would 'gradually set the native mind in motion and open an era of intellectual activity such as India has never witnessed.'[51] To make Urdu a fit vehicle to transport these new ideas, profound changes in the language were debated, even the introduction of the Roman alphabet, as the Urdu script was not deemed capable of reproducing the exact sound of English names and loan-words.[52]

The arrival of Lord Auckland to India in 1840 set the north Indian educational reform process in motion. An inquiry both into the history of the Delhi College and the grant by Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula was ordered, and John Thomason, a competent and sympathetic inspector was appointed for the North-Western Provinces with the instruction 'to visit Delhi, with full power, after holding a final examination, to dismiss all incompetent Teachers and to nominate and at once place in employment competent substitutes.'[53] Thomason's inquiry resulted in the restoration of the stipends to the scholars, although now on the basis of merit, and a very notable increase of the salaries of the teachers, which permitted the appointment to the Oriental section of scholars, whose merit was recognized within the walled city as well. Simultaneously, Felix Boutros, deputy collector in Bihar and a fine scholar of the classical languages, was appointed as the new principal of

50 *Delhi Gazette*, 25 April 1838.
51 Ibid., 10 December 1842.
52 Ibid., 14 June 1845.
53 Note Colvin, HP, 15.7.1840/7–14.

the Delhi College, as he 'possesses the character and acquirement necessary for our purpose, by his knowledge of European Literature and Science, together with a competent knowledge of the Oriental Languages.'[54]

The reform with the greatest impact for the future was the joining of the two branches of the college, the English and the Oriental, under one roof, no longer of the Ghaziu'd-Din madrasa, but of what had first been the library of Prince Dara Shukoh and later the Residence of Sir David Ochterlony—a symbolic shift, which placed the college right in the middle of the British offices and residences near Kashmiri Gate. At the same time, the curricula of the two branches were to be integrated, the emphasis being on 'useful' knowledge: natural sciences, mathematics, natural philosophy, economics, morals, and history. The medium of instruction would be English at the Delhi Institute and Urdu at the Delhi College, which at the same time would also continue the teaching of the classical Arabic and Persian books.

Aloys Sprenger, whom Ikram Chaghatai discusses in Chapter 3, further pushed the reforms initiated by the colonial bureaucracy and Felix Boutros. A scholar of a high standard, he was intimately linked to the circles of Orientalists in Vienna and Paris, and later in Heidelberg and Bern, and had early in life set himself the goal to travel to the Orient in order to 'contribute to the introduction of European culture and in turn bring back to Europe a better knowledge of the Orient and its literature.'[55] The enthusiasm for Indian literature momentarily obscures the profound asymmetry of the endeavour: while the East only contributes knowledge to the West, which remains otherwise unchanged, it is itself to be transformed by Western knowledge translated into indigenous languages.

Translation stood at the centre of the reformed Delhi College's activities—most obviously in the Vernacular Translation Society, which had been initiated by the new principal, but also forming the prevailing theme running through the lives of the teachers and pupils of this first generation. 'Translation as representation of another culture'[56] evokes the question of the control of representations, which has been extensively discussed in recent years in the field of anthropology. If we compare the translation activities at

54 HP, 16.12.1840/24.

55 See quotation, Chap. 3 of this volume, M. Ikram Chaghatai, fn. 21.

56 Thus the translation of the title of Bachmann-Medick, 1997.

Fort William College[57] with the Delhi College, it becomes clear that the colonial power aimed at controlling both ways: the representation of the Indian tradition for a British public (and by implication for the Indians themselves), but also the images Indians received about the West, notably its knowledge and scholarship, in accordance to which they were supposed to further develop their own representations. This is the side of the picture Gauri Viswanathan has so convincingly drawn.[58] However, the British hold over India was fragmented and far less complete than the focus on the construction of colonial knowledge in itself would imply. Even a translation which aimed at introducing a new discourse into the colonized people's language could not do so without making use of the existing language and concepts and hence reinterpreting and transforming the colonial message in the light of the indigenous system of knowledge. Instead of two neatly divided cultures placed in an unequivocally hierarchic structure, we thus find boundaries blurred by multiple and entangled translations—Zaka Ullah's multivolume history of India[59] being a good instance: a translation and readaptation from an English original, which in turn is a translation and interpretation from Persian sources, from which Zaka Ullah, too, draws.

Most papers in the present volume, thus, concentrate on the leading personages of the Delhi College in order to explore how far the original British intentions were carried out, reinterpreted, adapted, resisted, or simply ignored in the day-to-day life of the educational institution and how the contact with 'new ideas' impacted the lives of those to whom it held out the promise of an exciting cultural encounter, social rise, and respect from the colonial masters.

Patrons and Teachers

As we have seen above, issues of reform and reinvigoration of knowledge and the education which would lead to these results were already assiduously debated among the north Indian scholars

57 Bernard Cohen, 'The Command of Language and the Language of Command', in Bernard Cohen (ed.), *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 16–57.

58 Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*, 1989.

59 Zaka Ullah, *Tarikh-e Hindustan*, 9 vols, Delhi, Lit Verlag, 1879 ff.

before the British conquest of Delhi; the permissibility and advisability of an exposure to Western knowledge had been discussed in fatwas and letters years before the foundation of the Delhi College. How did the different schools of thought and the leaders of opinion react to the British attempt to 'set the native mind in motion' by confronting it with British scholarship?

With the exception of the *mujaddidi* Naqshbandi tradition, which refused any form of contact with the colonial sphere, be it in education or administration, the reaction of most of the schools remained ambivalent. The group most drawn to interaction with the colonial power were the family of Fazl-e Imam Khairabadi and his students, the leader of the *ma'qulat* (teaching of the rational sciences) tradition associated with the Firangi Mahal of Lucknow. It would be a matter of further research whether the theological position of this school, leaning on the Greek tradition of Islamic philosophy, which had already provided the ideological framework for the common training of Sunnis, Shias, and Hindus in Awadh,[60] also provided openings for the discussion with the British. Fazl-e Imam had migrated to Delhi at the beginning of the nineteenth century and quickly ascended to the post of *sadru's-sudur*, the supreme Indian judge at the Delhi court. His brother worked as a news writer in the service of the British at different courts in Rajasthan, and in the next generation his three sons held judicial posts in the service of the East India Company and some of their princely allies, while two nephews worked as personal secretaries to General Ochterlony.[61] His son and student, Fazl-e Haqq, too, had embarked upon a promising career in the judiciary of Delhi. Together with the scholarly prestige of his family, this made him one of the most obvious cultural mediators, to whom both sides turned for support. In a study on the autobiographical notes of Fazl-e Haqq, Jamal Malik showed that already at a very early stage Fazl-e Haqq had found it difficult to reconcile working under the British with his self-respect and critical appraisal of colonial rule.[62]

60 Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997.

61 Muhammad Ayub Qadir, 'Maulana Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi: Daur-e Mulazamat', in Afzal-e Haqq Qarshi (ed.), *Maulana Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi: Ek tahaqiqi muta'la*, Lahore, Al Fasil, 1992, pp. 17–19.

62 Jamal Malik, 'Briefe, autobiographische Aufzeichnungen und Gefängnisliteratur', in Andreas Eckert, Gesine Krüger (eds), *Lesarten eines globalen Prozesses: Quellen und Interpretationen zur Geschichte der europäischen Expansion*, Hamburg, Lit-Verlag, 1998, pp. 52–66.

He continued participate in the annual examinations of the Delhi College until his retirement (or dismissal, the sources remain vague) from service in 1831, lending prestige to the institution and thus contributing to its success among middle-class Muslims, but for him at least, imbibing foreign knowledge implied no capitulation to the 'language of modern ideas'.[63] This independence and ambiguity in the end told against him, as the British were all too willing to believe the contradictory evidence accusing him of complicity in the revolt of 1857 and exiled him to the Andaman Islands, where he died in 1861.

At least in appearance more successful as a mediator was his fellow student Muhammad Sadru'd-Din Khan, pen-named Azurda, who, however, unlike Fazl-e Haqq, refused to be drawn into the disputes and debates between the Khairabadis and the scholars of the madrasa of Rahimiyya. As Swapna Liddle shows in her article (Chapter 4), Azurda straddled the different spheres of Delhi where change was taking place. As sadru's-sudur he occupied one of the highest positions available to Indians in the colonial system; this singled him out for membership in almost all the associations and committees which the British founded in order to create a public sphere according to the Western model. For very many years he was a member of the Local Committee, on which the administration of the Delhi College devolved and exercised a great influence in choosing teachers, who were not only acceptable to the British, but also respected for their learning in the walled city. If the Delhi College was accepted to a degree in the intellectual community of Delhi, it was to a large extent due to his patronage. Nevertheless, his attempt to found a school of his own shows that, even for him, the translation of Western knowledge did not go uncontested, or at least was not meant to supersede all other forms of learning.

Too little is known about the Shia community of Delhi, which thrived under the patronage of Nawab Hamid 'Ali Khan, whom we encountered earlier as the son-in-law of Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula. Besides taking care of the nawab of Lucknow's property in Delhi, he controlled considerable family wealth. At least twice in the early 1840s, he was Prime Minister to Bahadur Shah; he

63 Sudhir Chandra, 'The Language of Modern Ideas: Reflections on an Ethnological Parable', in Sudhir Chandra, *Continuing Dilemmas: Understanding Social Consciousness*, Delhi, Tulika, 2002, pp. 1–18.

is remembered to this day as the founder of the Shia Masjid near Kashmiri Gate. All this, together with his membership in the Local Committee of the Delhi College, provided him with extensive possibilities for patronage, which he used to underline and develop a separate identity for the Shias—at least for him and those supported by him, the faultlines between Sunnis and Shias and within the Shia community still required more attention than the debate with the new forms of knowledge introduced by the British. Interestingly, these same people who seemed to ignore the intellectual challenge posed by the colonial situation, were among the first to make extensive use of the new printing technologies for the public discussion of their respective positions.[64]

If we look at the first generation of teachers at the Delhi College, who had received their education at other institutions or privately, what is striking is how little they seem touched by the interaction with Western knowledge and culture. Mamluk 'Ali, the *mir maulawi* (head instructor) for Arabic was recognized as an outstanding scholar of Delhi.[65] Born in 1787 in Nanauta, he came to Delhi at an early age to study with Maulawi Rashidu'd-Din, himself a student of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz and his brothers Shah Rafi'u'd-Din and Shah 'Abdu'l-Qadir. Though he soon became a master in the field of the rationalist sciences, his main allegiance was to the teachings of the madrasa of Rahimiyya, and it is as a scholar in the tradition of this school that he gained prestige and drew numerous students to him, among others both Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan, the founder of Aligarh, and Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi, the founder of Deoband, where his own son, Maulana Yaqub Nanautawi, too, was later to be appointed principal. Thus, Mamluk 'Ali constituted an important bridge between the traditions. He himself was still the product of a transmission of knowledge through the *ustad-shagird* (master-disciple) link. Though he held an office in a college, where the institutional identity was supposed to outweigh the personal relationship, he drew pupils by his personal prestige rather than by his position. He taught them the traditional scholarship, but in a way, which enabled them

64 Margrit Pernau, 'The Delhi Urdu Akhbar: Between Persian Akhbarat and English Newspapers', in *Annual of Urdu Studies*, 2003, pp. 1–27, here pp. 16–17 with further references.

65 For biographical information see Faruqi, pp. 252–2; Qasimi, vol. II, pp. 207–16; Karimu'd-Din, p. 463; Saiyid Ahmad Khan, *Asaru's-Sanadid*, p. 578.

to go new ways, when their turn came. While he is reported to have read all the English books as soon as they were translated, his outstanding memory permitting him to receive new knowledge with ease, this does not seem to have drawn him any closer to the British, if one is to believe Mirza Farhat Ullah Beg:

> A short while ago he was put to terrible embarrassment on account of his piety and fidelity to the Shara'. This is what had happened. The Resident Bahadur once went on an inspection of the Madrassah and shook hands with Maulawi Sahib by way of courtesy, owing to the great teacher's position and learning. For the duration of the Resident Bahadur's visit, Maulawi Sahib kept what he considered his defiled hand separated from the rest of his person as though the hand had been an unclean object. On the departure of the British guest, Maulawi Sahib washed his hands thoroughly several times. Someone reported the incident to the Resident Bahadur. The Resident was furious, for he thought he had conferred honour upon the Maulawi Sahib by shaking hands with him, in return for which the Maulawi Sahib had insulted and belittled him. It was with some difficulty that the matter was straightened out.[66]

This critical stand, together with the influence he had on his pupils, both inside and outside the Delhi College, makes it highly probable that he engaged actively with the new knowledge. However, hardly any evidence of this encounter survived, as the only publications from his pen are the translations of some chapters of Euclid and of the *Sunan-e Tirmizi*. He died in 1850.

The meticulous article by C.M. Naim on Imam Bakhsh (Chapter 5), pen-named Sahba'i, for the first time examines the way Persian scholarship was transmitted at the Delhi College—which surprisingly seems to have been no different from the approach followed in the more traditional educational institutions (of which, unfortunately, we still know far too little), or for that matter, by someone like Mirza Ghalib. His fondness for word-puzzles displayed his extraordinary mastery of the language, which took pride of place over any engagement with the contents. Nevertheless, even those students who later proved the luminaries of the Delhi renaissance, preserved a high respect and a strong emotional attachment for Sahba'i, whose teaching did not lose its meaning for them, even while they grappled with the new learning.

While the study of the aims colonial administrators pursued by the foundation and reform of the Delhi College inscribes this venture securely within the imperial agenda, this brief glance at

66 Mirza Farhat Ullah Beg, 'Last Mushairah', Pennsylvania University, pp. 64–5.

the indigenous patrons and teachers has shown that the British were by no means the only ones to follow an agenda. What the students actually learnt was the outcome of complex interactions between these aims. To these curricula we now turn.

The Curriculum: Educating an *'Alim* or Schooling Macaulay's Interpreter?

Before 1843 the Arabic and Persian classes followed a very abridged version of the *dars-e nizami*, the curriculum evolved at the Lucknow Firangi Mahal in the eighteenth century. The emphasis was on the mastery of the languages,[67] on law and the principles of jurisprudence[68], and a little of philosophy and logic.[69] Added to this were several books on mathematics, notably the works of Euclid, and some treatises on geography.

67 On the works included in the curriculum, see 'Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, p. 86. *Sarf-e Mir* is a Persian introduction to the Arabic language by Sharifu'l-Jurjani, see Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 522. *Nahv-e Mir*: a Persian work on Arabic syntax by Sharifu'l-Jurjani, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 523; *Hidayatu'l-nahv*: authorship disputed, on Arabic syntax, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 523; *Dasturu'l-mubtadi*: Arabic grammar by Safi Radawli (d. 1461), Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 530; *Kafia* (= al Kafia fi'l nahv) commentary by Ibn al Hajib, 1174–1249, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 72; *Mi'at amil*, by Abdul Qahir al Jurjani, Malik, 1997, p. 530; *Sharh mi'at amil*, commentary of Husain al Nawqani (d. 1520) on the preceding book, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 523.

68 *Hidaya* by al-Marghinani, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 533; *Sharh Wiqaya*, commentary by Ubaid Ullah b. Masud (d. 1346) on the *Wiqaya al Riwaya* of his grandfather Taju'l-Shariat Mahmud (d. 1274), Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 524; *Usulu'l-shashi*, by Abu Bakr al Shashi al Samarqandi (d. 976), Malik, 1997, p. 539, *Qaduri*, by Abu'l-Hasan b. Ahmad al Qaduri (972–1037), concise legal manual, dealing with rituals, contracts, personal status, criminal law, and law of succession, which has been translated into several languages (Jamal Malik, personal communication).

69 *Shams Bazigha*, commentary by Muhammad Faruq al Jaunpuri (d. 1652) to his own book *al Hikmatu'l-Baligha*, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 527; *Mir Qutbi*, commentary on *Sharh al Risala al Shamsiya* by Sharif al Jurjani, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 526; *Hidayatu'l-Hikmat*: by Asiru'd-Din al Abhari, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 527; *Qala Aqulu*, commentary on *al Isaghuji*, a work on logic, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 530; *Sharh-e mullah*, a commentary on the commentary that Sadru'd-Din Shirazi, called Mulla Sadra (died 1640), wrote on the *Hidayatu' l-Hikmat* of Asiru'd-Din al Abhari, Malik, *Islamische Gelehrtenkultur*, 1997, p. 527.

What is astonishing is the almost complete exclusion of religious books (possibly with the exception of the tradition of the Prophet),[70] to the correct understanding of which grammar, syntax, and philosophy were traditionally deemed to constitute only a first, but indispensable step. Here, on the contrary, it seems to have been the mastery of the language, which was the primary concern and which also provided the rationale for the choice of books. The classical books continued to be taught for lack of a better alternative, but in the long run were to be replaced by works of literature,[71] as for instance the *Arabian Nights* and the *Kalila Dimna*, which were introduced by Sprenger, principal since 1845. More than it seems to have been realized at the time, and as far as we know hardly resisted, this development struck at the root of the traditional concept of knowledge. *'Ilm* used to encompass the entire universe of knowledge which was not yet to be divided into 'religious' and 'worldly'. An *'alim* (pl. *'ulama*) was, therefore, a scholar who had acquired *'ilm*, independent of his personal piety and of the field in which he exercised his profession. While much of the older curriculum was retained at the Delhi College, the orientation towards religion and the intimate link which held the different fields of knowledge together was broken[72]—under these circumstances it was indeed interchangeable whether a student learned Arabic from a collection of *Hadis* (traditions of the Prophet) or from *Thousand and One Nights*. If an alumnus of the Delhi College was still recognized as 'alim, he would certainly be 'alim of a different sort. But were they recognized as scholars in spite of the curricular changes in the Oriental department? The sources are conflicting. On the one hand, as shown above, the credentials of teachers like Mamluk 'Ali and Imam Bakhsh were above doubt and they were acknowledged scholars, leaving aside the factional squabbles which formed part of the life of the intellectual elite of north India. Similarly no one would doubt the academic achievements of those of their pupils who later became famous, like Nazir Ahmad and Zaka Ullah. However, it is possible that they formed an exception,

70 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, p. 40.

71 Ibid., p. 60.

72 For a more detailed discussion of this concept see Margrit Pernau, 'Middle Class and Secularization: The Muslims of Delhi in the Nineteenth Century', in Imtiaz Ahmad, Helmut Reifeld (eds), *Middle Class Values in India and Western Europe*, Delhi, Social Science Press, 2003, pp. 21–42.

while the rank and file of the students failed to live up to the standards of the traditional learned circles of Delhi. Even in relation to the other north Indian government colleges, the Delhi College did not compare favourably, and Thomason, a visitor to the college, fought a hard battle with the General Committee for Public Instruction in Calcutta in order to have the standards of the tests for the grant of scholarships lowered for Delhi and Agra, as otherwise no student would have a chance to secure a scholarship.[73]

However, after 1840 the primary interest of the colonial power was no longer to impart traditional wisdom to future scholars, but to provide the entry point from where Western knowledge would change the indigenous culture and 'set the natives in motion'. Side by side with reading the ancient commentaries the students of the Oriental department of the college were therefore taught mathematics, natural sciences, and also political economy, history, and natural philosophy. The medium of instruction was Urdu, but the books were translations and adaptations from English, brought out by the college itself as the curriculum developed. The list of books, which were translated by the staff and the senior students of the Delhi College, is indeed impressive, ranging from algebra and geometry to revenue laws and McNaughten's principles of Islamic criminal law, from English history to Smith's *Moral Sentiments* and from books on hydraulics to treatises on the polarization of light—in all almost 130 books in the short span of 15 years between the reform of the college and the outbreak of the revolt of 1857.[74]

The alumni of the Delhi College were not supposed to be passive recipients and transmitters of British culture. Rather, their training aimed at creating translators, who were deeply familiar with both cultures so that they would use their knowledge of Western scholarship to rethink and transform the canonic knowledge of the East and thus bring together both worlds. This programme, which so fascinated C.F. Andrews and the later admirers of the Delhi renaissance,[75] nevertheless contained a profound asymmetry. If the Delhi College was held to build a bridge between cultures, the bridge was designed as a one-way street only. But, to further extend the image, the power of the British was not so complete that they could prevent

73 HP 30.6.1841, 18–20.

74 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, pp. 149–55.

75 Margrit Pernau, 'Preparing a Meeting Ground: C.F. Andrews, St. Stephen's and the Delhi College', in Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, 2003, pp. xlvii–lxxv.

the cross-cultural merchants from smuggling. Even less could they control the use the goods were put to, once they reached the other side. How then did the students negotiate the different aims of the Delhi College? What use did they make of the curricular offers? Did their lives and careers fulfill the hopes and redeemed the promises of the founders? It is to these questions that we now turn.

Cultural Mediation, a Road to Social Ascend and Honour?

Although the papers brought together in this volume show that it is possible to reconstruct the lives of a number of illustrious former students of the Delhi College in considerable detail, the sources only rarely permit statements on the rank and file of the pupils. One fascinating exception is the report on the examinations for 1831, which gives a detailed breakup of the origin of the students. Accordingly in the English section, among the Muslims, the Shaikhs, classically the community through which access to respectability is achieved, dominated with 23 pupils, closely followed by the Saiyids, renowned for their learning, with 19 pupils. The Mughals and Pathans, the traditional social elite, only counted a meagre nine and six pupils, respectively. Among the Hindus, the pride of place was held by the Kayasthas with 23 pupils, but also, more astonishingly, by an equal number of Mahajans. Brahmins and Kashmiri Pandits followed with 12 and nine pupils. In the Arabic and Persian classes, still much more in demand than English education in 1831, the largest number of Muslim students hailed from the Saiyid (60) and Shaikh (58) communities. Mughals and Pathans followed with 28 and 13 students respectively. Among the Hindus, there was a dominance by the Kashmiris with 20 students, followed by the Brahmins with 15 and the Kayasthas astonishingly with only 14 pupils. The Sanskrit department, on the other hand, was an exclusively Brahmin preserve.[76] Unfortunately there seems to exist no corresponding breakup for the time after the reform of the college. As, however, the Hindus always consti-

76 J.H. Taylor to H.H. Wilson, Junior Member and Secretary to the General Committee for Public Instruction (GCPI), 31.1.1831, Report on the Examinations of the Delhi Institution for the year 1831, F/4/1386 55228A, Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC).

tuted about two-third of the student population,[77] it seems probable that the college was not so much frequented by the old elites, than by those who profited from the upheaval brought about by the colonial power and for whom a career in the British service might be a means to upward social mobility. This is supported by the fact that every enhancing or curtailment of the stipends was immediately reflected in the number of students, showing that the funds available for investment in the education of the younger generation were very limited.

As Gail Minault shows in her paper (Chapter 6), Master Ram Chandra was the one person among the former students and later teachers of Delhi College, who opened up most radically to Western ideas. An eminent mathematician, who was recognized not only in India, but also in England, his lasting impact was in the field of the propagation of knowledge, both inside the college as a teacher and outside as a journalist, making use of the new printing technology to spread his ideas. Although Ram Chandra has been attacked, by his contemporaries as well as by later scholars, for forcing the Westernization of indigenous knowledge, his aim, as shown by the programmatic title of his journal, was the *Qir'anu's sadain*, the felicitous joining of the two planets, standing for Eastern and Western culture. Notably, his mathematical and scientific research drew consciously from Indian heritage; in the humanities, too, particularly in philosophy and religion, he advocated not so much surrender to the West, but a critical sifting of indigenous traditions. What he never seems to have discussed, possibly because it was so obvious for him, were the criteria on which this sifting was to be based, and which appeared universal to him, while they carried the imprint of Western culture for his adversaries. This suspicion that he was surrendering all too much to the West and that the propagation of Western science and rationality in the end would lead to the Christianization of India, was greatly reinforced by Ram Chandra's conversion.

Just as much as Master Ram Chandra, but on a more subdued tone, Maulawi Karimu'd-Din corresponded to the ideal of translator and cultural mediator that the British had intended to bring about through the Delhi College. In her paper, Avril A. Powell focuses on the tensions, which nevertheless marked his relations

77 See the statistics given in 'Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, pp. 119–20.

with the colonial power (Chapter 7). Educated at the Delhi College, Karimu'd-Din became the mainstay of the Vernacular Translation Society, organizing not only the translations and their corrections, but also taking care of the printing and the distribution of the books. Loss of patronage, however, prevented an academic career. After 1857, he took up minor appointments in the Punjab Educational Service, where his superiors seem to have regarded and treated him rather as a munshi than as the scholarly bridge builder between two cultures, to which his education had fitted him. The Delhi College had introduced him to a profession, which permitted the reconsolidation of the family's economic position, but at the same time he was refused the respect and social leadership to which an 'alim traditionally deemed himself entitled. Unlike for those people of the elder generation like Fazl-e Haqq and Azurda, whose belittling by the colonial power was still more than made up by the respect for their scholarship within their own community, men like Karimu'd-Din had left the old world without really attaining the new.

This topic of unfulfilled promises is further developed in Michael H. Fisher's chapter on Mohan Lal (Chapter 8)—a very important reminder that although the Delhi College by now constitutes a central *lieu de memoire* of the north Indian Muslim community, at the time almost two-thirds of its students were coming from a Hindu background. Mohan Lal's life shows once more that far from being a harmonious venture equally welcomed by Indians and Europeans, cultural mediation took place in an extremely contested area. More often than not, it led to the mediator's alienation from both communities—Mohan Lal was excommunicated from the Kashmiri Pandit caste, without being admitted into British Indian society as an equal. A 'mimetic man' in the term of Homi Bhabha, Mohan Lal experienced the simultaneous claim and denial of assimilation. Western culture, as he was to realize, was inclusive only in its universalistic garb, through which it claimed that its discoveries—scientific, literary, moral—were not limited in their relevance to a certain geographical area, but showed the way to mankind in its entirety. At the same time, full access to this culture was refused to men like Mohan Lal, who were not recognized as possible equals.

Although he held a professorship at Allahabad for many years, the image transmitted to posterity might perhaps not have been

so very different for Maulawi Zaka Ullah, if it had not been for the biography C.F. Andrews dedicated him. In his article Mushirul Hasan brings out the multifaceted personality of this scholar, teacher, historian, and textbook writer (Chapter 9). Favourite pupil of Master Ram Chandra and Queen Victoria's most loyal Indian subject, Zaka Ullah was at the same time deeply embedded in Delhi's *sharif* culture. Though impregnated by the Delhi College credo that India needed to be changed through the encounter with Western sciences, the Urdu language for him was never just a means to effect their more successful acculturation, but a value in itself. The analysis of his extraordinarily extended writings, therefore, show that they were much more than mere translations, but a creative way of coming to terms with the new knowledge by showing the underlying harmony of old and new.

The best known among the pupils of the Delhi College was Nazir Ahmad, to whom Christina Oesterheld devotes her article (Chapter 10), using not only his creative writings, but also introducing the reader to the collection of his speeches, which show many new facets. Nazir Ahmad was at the same time successful in the colonial administration, rising to the position of deputy collector; an ardent supporter of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan's educational projects; but also aware of the Muslim community's need to concentrate not only on government service. He exhorted them to take to business, and indeed was a gifted businessman himself, a powerful orator, and most of all a writer of extraordinary creative power, remembered mostly for his didactic novels for Muslim women. In his essays and his novels Nazir Ahmad gave voice to the ambiguities of a whole generation,[78] drawn to the ideas of the colonial power and resisting them, advocating a scientific outlook on life and afraid it might destroy their faith, immensely proud of their Indo-Persian heritage and consigning it to the flames.

Conclusion: Was there a Delhi Renaissance?

Charles F. Andrews, the British missionary, who later was to become a close collaborator of Gandhi and Tagore, celebrated the Delhi College as the cause and symbol of the Delhi renaissance

78 Sudhir Chandra, *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992.

and many scholars have echoed him, taking the characterization as the compliment Andrews intended it to be. However, almost a century later, the profound ambiguity of the term and concept can no longer be overlooked.

Andrews' earlier writings are marked by the attempt to reconcile Western and Eastern cultures, pointing out that converts did not need to shun their own background, but that the best of Eastern philosophy and religion did not contradict Christian values. Instead showed a spark of divine light, which prepared the peoples for the reception of Christianity: 'We may surely believe that the Eternal Word was the Light of the Buddha and Tulsi Das in their measure, even as He was, in so much greater a degree, the Light of the Hebrew Prophets; that Hinduism in its higher religious history was a true *praeparatio evangelica*.'[79] The teaching of 'English literature, English history and economics, English philosophy, [which] carry with them of necessity Christian components of life'[80] as it had been done at the Delhi College, in his eyes contributed to the cleansing and regeneration of the indigenous systems of knowledge and set them on the road to truth. What had died of suffocation from an overgrowth of superstition received a new life and was born again by the pruning of Western knowledge. Not for nothing did Andrews consider Macaulay one of his heroes, whose Minute of Education 'represented the first full inter-penetration of the two greatest civilizations that the world has ever seen.'[81]

In its basic assumptions, thus, the term 'renaissance', both with regard to what was to be considered as dead and in need of a revival and the shape the new knowledge was to take in order to be considered able to lead to enlightenment, bears the imprint of the colonial situation at the eve of the First World War and carries only very limited use as an analytical tool.

In this introduction it has been suggested that it might instead be an avenue worth exploring to tackle the educational policy of the colonial power and the north Indian elite through the concept of translation—a translation which is not to be reduced to a neutral transposition of meaning from one language to another, but seen

79 C.F. Andrews, *The Renaissance in India: Its Missionary Aspect*, London, Cambridge Church Missionary Society, 1912, p. 42.

80 Ibid., p. 24.

81 Ibid., p. 21.

as impacted by interaction and profoundly marked by the exercise of power.[82]

Although this power was by no means equally distributed—a notion which often seems to be read into the concept of dialogue—the British empire nevertheless was not total but fragmented, needing alliances and inviting resistance. Translation, too, therefore was not a one-way-street. The texts changed their meanings as they were translated and were not always read in the way the British had intended them to be read. Moreover, the British texts to be translated were no 'originals' but already bore the mark of earlier colonial attempts to make sense of the Indian universe by translating it into familiar concepts; the new layer of translation was superimposed on these earlier layers, which like in a palimpsest showed through. In turn, they were read through the lenses of cultural pre-assumption and with reference to the entire universe of meaning encapsulated in a language. Reactions ranged from an almost unconditional takeover of the new knowledge to a complete refusal to become tainted, passing by various degrees of ambiguity, attempting to harmonize the two worlds or to leave them side by side, each in its place.

Instead of a clear dichotomy between West and East, the colonizer and the colonized, the one powerful and active, the other powerless and waiting to be 'set in motion' through the translation of a system of knowledge, we are (once again!) left with blurred boundaries, bearing the traces of multiple crossings-over. Translation, in this setting, was not a single and unilateral activity, but multiple—an appropriate symbol for the 'mutual encounters' and 'entangled histories' of the colonial period.[83]

82 Martin Fuchs, 'Übersetzen und Übersetzt-werden: Plädoyer für eine interaktionsanalytische Reflexion', in Bachmann-Medick, *Übersetzung als Reprësentation*, 1997, pp. 308–28.

83 Malik, *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters*, 2000; Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (eds), *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt, Campus, 2002.

Section 1
The Historical Background

1

The Madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan at Delhi

Ebba Koch

Introduction

Ever since I met Dr Yunus Jaffery in 1976 in his *hujra*, his small room in the south wing of the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din, the building became for me conceptually part of his person as a scholar and teacher.[1] When one left the crowded area of Ajmeri Gate and stepped through the gate of the school into the courtyard with its plants and trees, one entered a different world of peace and tranquillity—that was when teaching is on, otherwise the boys who study in the Anglo-Arabic School of Zakir Husain College, now accommodated in the wings of the madrasa, could make the progress to Dr Jaffery's place quite a trying experience. But when one had climbed the steep stairs to the upper floor, one was safe, walked down the corridor, knocked at the door, exchanged the ritual greetings, drank the offered tea while talking about this and that, and then the work could begin. The hours of study were punctuated by the call to prayer from the mosque, which forms part of the building, to which Dr Jaffery attended with great

1 Sadly, at the end of the year 2004, Dr Jaffery had to leave his room which was a meeting place dear to foreign visitors and scholars interested in Indian Islam and particularly, the history of Delhi.

regularity and devotion. Occasionally a visitor entered, with whom a few words were exchanged, then we turned again to 'Abdu'l-Hamid Lahauri or Abu Talib Kalim, or whichever author was under consideration. This is how we read and translated Mughal historians and poets—focusing on those of Shah Jahan and what they had to say about the emperor's architecture, art, and self-representation—throughout the 10 years of my stay in India (1976–86) and during my annual returns. As it happens with a place with which one is very familiar, one does not consider it from an analytical point of view; this contribution to a volume on Delhi College dedicated to Dr Jaffery is a welcome opportunity for me to make an attempt in this direction.

History

The madrasa was founded by Ghaziu'd-Din Khan at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century and has been one of Delhi's leading places of learning, also being the oldest continuing school in the city. The builder, Mir Shihabu'd-Din, came to Hindustan from Bukhara in the early 1670s and entered the service of Aurangzeb. That he was from Central Asia, made him a 'Turani', an ethnicity which together with the Iranians represented the most advantaged group in the Mughal ranking system.[2] He was soon employed in commanding positions in the emperor's Deccan campaigns. For his successes against the Marathas he received in 1684 the title of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan Bahadur, to which was added one year later 'Firuz Jang' (Victorious in the Battle). His services in the conquest of Haidarabad earned Ghaziu'd-Din Khan Bahadur Firuz Jang the high *mansab* (rank) of 7000 *zat*/7000 *sawar* (3000 2–3 horses),[3] and even when he lost his eyesight in 1690 after suffering from plague during the siege of Bijapur, he was allowed to continue his military and administrative career. Aurangzeb's son Shah 'Alam I Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707–12) made Ghaziu'd-Din governor of Gujarat. The Khan died in Ahmadabad, the capital of the province, in 1122/1710. His body was brought to Delhi and, as

2 M. Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire: Award of Ranks, Offices and Titles to the Mughal Nobility, 1574–1658*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. xx–xxi.

3 For an explanation of the ranking system of the Mughals, see Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire*, pp. xi–xxvi.

Shah Nawaz Khan, to whom we owe a short biography of the noble puts it, was 'buried near the Ajmeri gate in the tomb and *khânaqâh* which he had made'.[4] This historian omits to mention that Ghaziu'd-Din Khan was the father of Chin Qilich Khan Qamaru'd-Din Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah (r. 1720–48), the founder of the state of Haidarabad.[5]

Until the late eighteenth century, the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan seems to have functioned as a traditional Muslim institution of higher learning. When the British took over Delhi in 1803, they strengthened the walls of Shahjahanabad and the proximity of the madrasa to the Ajmeri Gate was considered objectionable from a military point of view. The building, therefore, had to either be demolished or included within the fortification.[6] The latter alternative was adopted (though the upper part of the gateway was taken off) and the madrasa was turned into a prominent bastion with three pointed salients in its west.[7] The projection in the city walls immediately meets the eye on the most important map of pre-Mutiny Shahjahanabad, datable around 1850, in the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library, London.[8]

4 For the life of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan, I have used Shah Nawaz Khan, *Ma'âthir-ul-umarâ*, English trans. Henry Beveridge, 1911–41; rpt. Patna, Janaki Prakashan, 1979, vol. 1, pp. 587–92. About the foundation of the madrasa, masjid, and mausoleum in one complex, see also Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, English trans. in parts by J. Bird, *Political and Statistical History of Gujarat*, London, 1835, quoted after Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *History of Education in Medieval India AD 1192–AD 1757*, Delhi, Originals, 2001, p. 97.

5 The authors of the early guidebooks of Delhi indicate wrongly that Ghaziu'd-Din Khan was the son of Nizamu'l-Mulk, see e.g. Carr Stephen, *The Archaeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi*, 1876, rpt. New Delhi, Ashish Publishing House, n.d., p. 263; H.C. Fanshawe, *Shah Jahan's Delhi: Past and Present*, 1902; rpt., Delhi, Sumit Publications, 1979; p. 64; *Keene's Handbook for Visitors to Delhi and its Neighbourhood*, rewritten and brought up to date by E.A. Duncan, 6th edn, Calcutta, Thacker, Spink and Co. 1906, p. 34.

6 Stephen, *Archaeology and Monumental Remains*, p. 264; Keene, *Handbook*, p. 34.

7 M. Zafar Hasan, *Delhi Province: List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments*, vol. 2: *Delhi Zail* (*Excluding Shahjahanabad*), with contributions by Gordon Sanderson and J.A. Page, ed. by J.A. Page, 1919, rpt. under the title *Monuments of Delhi: Lasting Splendour of the Great Mughals and Others*, New Delhi, Aryan Books International, 1997, vol. 2, pp. 1–3; Shama Mitra Chenoy, *Shahjahanbad: A City of Delhi, 1638–1857*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1998, p. 101, claims that the work on the city walls was completed in 1811 but does not give a source for this date.

8 India Office Records, X, 1659. The map has been redrawn, edited, and published by Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft, *Shahjahanabad: Old Delhi, Tradition and*

Under the British the madrasa became the first home of the Delhi College and its affiliated educational activities which are the subject of the contributions of this volume, thus I shall refer to them only briefly. The Delhi College was established in the madrasa in 1825 and remained there until 1842, when it was shifted to a Mughal building called Dara Shukoh's Library near Kashmiri Gate.[9] A branch of Delhi College, the Oriental College was endowed in 1829 by the so called E'timadu'd-daula Fund, as indicated on an inscription on the courtyard front of the gate of the madrasa, with one lakh seventy thousand (1,70,000) rupees by Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula Fazl 'Ali Khan from Lucknow;[10] and the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society was set up as an adjunct of the Delhi College in 1843.[11] After the Uprising or Mutiny of 1857–8, the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan was occupied by the police with which it remained until 1889, when the Anglo-Arabic School was moved to the building.[12] According to Dr Jaffery, who wrote an unpublished article about the madrasa and its history in 1982, the building underwent further alterations in the twentieth century; so was its tank[13] filled in with old debris from the towers and *chhatris*, which had

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Colonial Change, Erdkundliches Wissen 111, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993; 2nd edn, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 2003.

9 Narayani Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires, 1803–1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 5–7; Muhammad Ikram Chaghatai, 'Dr Aloys Sprenger (1813–1893): His Life and Contribution to Urdu Language and Literature', *Iqbal Review*, vol. 36, no. 1, April 1995, pp. 77–99, in particular p. 82.

10 M. Zafar Hasan, *List: Delhi Zail*, p. 1 gives the reading of the inscription as 'There remains no mark on the tablet, but the reward of an act and a good name. In the blessed memory of Nawab Itimadu-d-Daula Ziau-l-Mulk Sayyid Fazli Ali Khan Bahadur Suhrab Jang, who entrusted the Honourable English East India Company with one lak and seventy thousand rupees for the advancement of learning at this school, situated in Delhi proper, his native place, (this tablet) was inscribed in AD 1829. Written by Sayyid Amir Rizwi'.

11 Chaghatai, 'Dr Aloys Sprenger', p. 87.

12 Stephen, *Archaeology and Monumental Remains*, p. 264 ; Fanshawe, *Shah Jahan's Delhi*, p. 65; Keene, *Handbook*, p. 34; Zafar Hasan, *List*, p. 3; Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires*, pp. 104, 136.

13 The tank, full of water and with a fountain playing, is visible on one of Sita Ram's watercolours done for Lord Hastings in 1815, British Library, Add. Or. 4819 for which see our Fig 1.1. Stephen, *Archaeology and Monumental Remains*, p. 266, says that by this time (1876), it was dry; cf also Keene, *Handbook*, p. 34. Zafar Hasan, *List: Delhi Zail*, p. 1, saw it filled up and grassed (1919). See also below.

been demolished and left lying behind the mosque when the madrasa was incorporated in the lines of defence of the city after the British conquest of 1803.[14]

The building again served military purposes during the disturbances after the partition in 1947, and in 1949 the north-eastern portion of the school was given to Pakistani refugees, who stayed there for two years. In 1948 Zakir Husain and Maulana Abu'l Kalam Azad, the education minister of the new Republic of India, reactivated the school again under its old name—Anglo-Arabic Higher Secondary School, but it was then decided to change the name into Delhi College, which would better reflect the wider agenda of the syllabus. The first principal Mirza Mahmud Beg held the office from 1948 until 1952 and undertook a number of alterations, which affected several parts of the building. In 1974 the college was named Zakir Husain College; the building is now called Anglo-Arabic Public School Building. In 1996 the northern part of the west wall was removed and in 2005 the Delhi Development Authority began to restore the building by creating in the courtyard a new sandstone tank and undulating walkways which drastically altered the historical design and the character of the building.[15]

The Architecture

The madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan represents one of the few surviving Mughal madrasas; it is an outstanding and well-planned example. The story of the madrasas in South Asia still remains to be written but it is evident that as a building type it did not play a great role in Mughal architecture, nor in the earlier architecture of the Delhi sultans.[16] So far only four madrasas have entered the architectural history of the Indian subcontinent.

14 For this and the following see unpublished manuscript of Dr Yunus Jaffery; he has kindly allowed me to quote from it. He told me that his main source was *M. Fazil ke Afsane* (The Stories of M. Fazil), a textbook for Urdu written in the 1940s.

15 The restoration entailed forceful eviction of a large number of people living in the building, considered as unauthorized occupants; the procedure was picked up by the media. See Aruna P. Sharma, 'Anglo-Arabic School needs restoration, urgently', *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 27 January 2005; or 'Anglo Arabic School breathes easy', *Times of India*, New Delhi, 25 March 2005.

16 P.N. Chopra's, *Life and Letters Under the Mughals*, New Delhi, Ashajanak Publications, 1976, pp. 138–41, assembles references to madrasas but does not deal with their architecture. On the institution of Mughal madrasas see Munibur

The earliest is the Hauz Khas madrasa of Firuz Shah Tughluq (r. 1351–88) at Delhi. It has an eccentric design, which breaks entirely with the form of a courtyard enclosure, by then usual for madrasas in the Muslim world.[17] Instead, a sequence of courts and long open halls was arrayed along two sides of the already existing Hauz Khas reservoir. Next in time is the madrasa of the sultans Hushang Shah and Mahmud Khalji at Mandu in Malwa. It was originally called Bam-i Bihisht (Roof of Paradise) and is now known as Ashrafi Mahal. Construction started in 845/1442 and the original building followed the design of an open courtyard surrounded by ranges of cells and arcades; the inner open space was later filled up and used as a base of the mausoleum of the Khaljis.[18] Then there is the madrasa of Mahmud Gawan in Bidar, dated 877/1472, which represents a pure import of a Timurid four *îwân*-plan into the Deccan.[19] From the early Mughal period dates the Khairu'l-Manazil, built in 969/1561–2 by Akbar's wet-nurse Maham Anaga opposite the Purana Qil'a , an area which was then Mughal Delhi.[20] The Khairu'l-Manazil was also inspired by Timurid models and

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Rahman, 'II. In Muslim India', pp. 1134–6 in a compound article 'Madrasa', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn (henceforth quoted as EI2), V, 1986, pp. 1123–54.

For madrasas outside South Asia see Dietrich Brandenburg, *Die Madrasa*, Graz, Akademische Druck-und Verlaganstalt, 1978; and Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form Function and Meaning*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994, pp. 173–251; as it often happens in general works about Muslim art and architecture, India is left out of the discussion. For later Qajar madrasa see Markus Ritter, *Moseheen-und Madrasabauten in Iran 1785–1848*, Leiden, Brill, 2005.

17 Brandenburg, *Die Madrasa*; Robert Hillenbrand, 'Architecture', in 'Madrasa', EI2, pp. 1136–54; Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, as in the previous note.

18 D.R. Patil, *Mandu*, New Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, 1975, pp. 42–4, plate 5; for the history of the building see Y. Porter, 'Khalji Architecture of Malwa in the Light of the Ma'aser-e Mahmudshahi', in F. 'Nalini' Delvoye ed., *Confluence of Cultures: French Contribution to Indo-Persian Studies*, Tehran and New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 1994, pp. 29–30.

19 Ghulam Yazdani, *Bidar: Its History and Monuments*, London, Oxford University Press, 1947, pp. 91–100; for Timurid madrasas see Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, 2 vols, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988, text vol. in particular p. 87. The four iwan plan is explained below.

20 Ebba Koch, 'The Delhi of the Mughals Prior to Shahjahanabad as Reflected in the Patterns of Imperial Visits', in A.J. Qaisar and S.P. Verma eds, *Art and Culture: Felicitation Volume in Honour of Professor S. Nurul Hasan*, Jaipur, Publications Scheme, 1993, pp. 2–20, in particular, p. 7; rpt. in Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press 2001, p. 168.

combines the characteristic single-aisled Delhi mosque with a madrasa of the two iwan plan.[21]

The lack of surviving madrasa buildings suggests that in India schools were often attached to or integrated into mosques. This is, for instance, indicated by the organization of the wings of the Jami' Masjid of Fatehpur Sikri (*c.* 976–85/1568–78), which, behind an arcaded gallery, show the characteristic ranges of unconnected cells (hujra) where teachers or student would reside.[22] Also dargahs of religious teachers could function as schools.[23]

This fragmentary evidence of Mughal madrasa buildings adds to the significance of the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din, and it is fortunate that, throughout its changing history, it has preserved much of its original design. It consists of a courtyard building of three wings, the fourth wing in the west is represented by a mosque, and there is also the tomb of the founder in an enclosure at the southern side of the mosque. Mosque, courtyard wings, and tomb present themselves today not much different as they appear on the earliest depictions of the building that are known to me. These are a group of unpublished watercolours by the Indian artist Sita Ram, who was employed by Lord Hastings, governor general of Bengal, to record the monuments he visited during his great tour through northern India in 1815. One of Sita Ram's drawings, inscribed erroneously as 'Shah Jehan's Musgid and Dewan Khanah to the left' (53.0 × 36.5 cm), shows the courtyard of the madrasa with its tank and its mosque in the background (though it leaves out the tomb) (Fig. 1.1); two other watercolours inscribed as 'Another view of the Madrissa at Delhi' (42.3 × 56 cm) and yet 'Another view of the Madrissa and Tombs within its enclosure at Delhi' (41.1 × 52.4 cm) depict the tomb of the founder.[24] More accurate, despite their

21 Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of its History and Development (1526–1858)* 2nd edn, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 63, plan fig. 57.

22 E.W. Smith, *The Moghul Architecture of Fathpur-Sikri*, ASINIS 18, 4 vols, 1894–8, reprinted Delhi, Caxton Publications, 1985, vol. 4, p. 3, plan II (ground plan); S. Athar Abbas Rizvi and Vincent J.A. Flynn, *Fathpur-Sikri*, Bombay, D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1975, p. 72.

23 Chopra, *Life and Letters*, p. 139.

24 British Library, Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections, Add. Or. 4819, 4813, and 4818. There are two more watercolours by Sita Ram, showing according to their inscription the madrasa and tombs in it or near it. Add. Or. 4812, inscribed as 'Madrissa or College at Delhi with many beautiful small Tombs in white



Fig. 1.1. View into the courtyard of the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan painted by the Indian artist Sita Ram for Lord Hastings in 1815, inscribed erroneously as 'Shah Jehan's Musgid and Dewan Khanah to the left'. Add. Or. 4819 (53.0 × 36.5 cm). The artist shows the south wing, part of courtyard with the tank and mosque in the background. By permission of the British Library, London

small format, are four Company paintings illustrating the *Delhie Book* of Sir Thomas Metcalfe (1842–4).[25] They show 'The mosque

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marble', depicts an enclosure with varied arcades and marble tombstones but the architecture does not tally with that of the madrasa; and Add. Or. 4821, inscribed as 'Tomb of [gap] near the College' shows a marble enclosure of open work (jali'), similar to the tomb of Ghazi'ud-Din Khan, and the mosque of the madrasa in the background. I thank J.P. Losty, retired Head of the Prints, Drawings and Photographs Section of the Asia, Pacific and African Collections (previously called Oriental and India Office Collections), British Library for drawing my attention to these watercolours and for providing me with photographs.

25 British Library, Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections, Add. Or. 5475, fol. 64b and 65a. A fifth painting, fol. 65v, inscribed *'shabih maqbara nawab Qamru'd-Din Khan'* shows two graves on a marble platform in a sunk hexagonal enclosure

attached to the Mudrussah or College outside the City of Dehly—*naqsha-i madrasa Ghiyâs*[26] *u'd-Dîn Haidar'* (8.2 × 12.7 cm), the 'South Portion of the Interior of the Quadrangle—*maktab khâna-i maqbara* [school-house of the tomb] *Ghiyâsu'd-Dîn'* (8.2 × 12.7 cm), the 'North Portion of the Interior of the Quadrangle—*naqsha-i maktab khâna-i maqbara* [picture of the schoolhouse of the tomb] *Ghiyâsu'd-Dîn'* (8.2 × 12.7 cm) and *'naqsha-i maqbara–i Ghiyâsu'd-Dîn andarûn se* [picture of the tomb of Ghiyasu'd-Din from inside]' (9.2 × 12.7 cm). There is also a line drawing of the mosque in Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan's *Asâru's-Sanâdîd* (1847) as illustration of his brief treatment of the building.[27]

After that, the architecture of the madrasa did not get much attention from scholars, apart from being mentioned in guidebooks of Delhi and general works.[28] A useful assessment is by Zafar Hasan who gives also a reading of the inscription of the endowment of E'timad-ud-Daula.[29] Recent treatments are by Koch[30] and Asher[31] who include the madrasa in their discussion of the architecture of Aurangzeb's reign, and in 2003–4 its south wing was surveyed for a conservation project study by Mirko Würl and Daniel Adamus from the Department of Civil Engineering, Fachhochschule Erfurt, Germany, in collaboration with Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi.

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for Metcalfe, have been published by Mary Margaret Kaye, *The Golden Calm: An English Lady's Life in Moghul Delhi*, Exeter, Devon: 1980, which integrates pages of Metcalfe's handwritten *Delhi Book* or *Reminiscences of Imperial Dehlie*; the illustrations of the madrasa are inserted after p. 168.

26 While Metcalfe indicates the name correctly as 'Ghazeeoodeen Khan' the writer of the Urdu capitions gives it erroneously as Ghiyasu'd-Din. Metcalfe is however confused about the identity of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan and believes him to have been active in the reign of Muhammad Shah and Ahmad Shah.

27 Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan *Asâru's-Sanâdîd* (Urdu), ed. Khâlid Nasir Hâshmi, 1904; rpt., Delhi, Central Book Depot, Urdu Bazar, Jami' Masjid, 1965, p. 301. For the various editions of this work see Christian W. Troll, 'A Note on an Early Topographical Work of Sayyid Ahmad Khan: Asar al-Sanadid', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1972, pp. 135–46.

28 Stephen, *Archaeology and Monumental Remains*, pp. 263–6; Fanshawe, *Shah Jahan's Delhi*, pp. 64–5; Keene, *Handbook*, p. 34. The most comprehensive description is by Stephen but it is marred by mistakes and since he did not have a plan at his disposal it is difficult to understand.

29 Zafar Hasan, *List* (as in note 6), pp. 1–3.

30 Koch, *Mughal Architecture*, pp. 130–1.

31 C.B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, The New Cambridge History of India, 1, 4, Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 274–5.

The Design

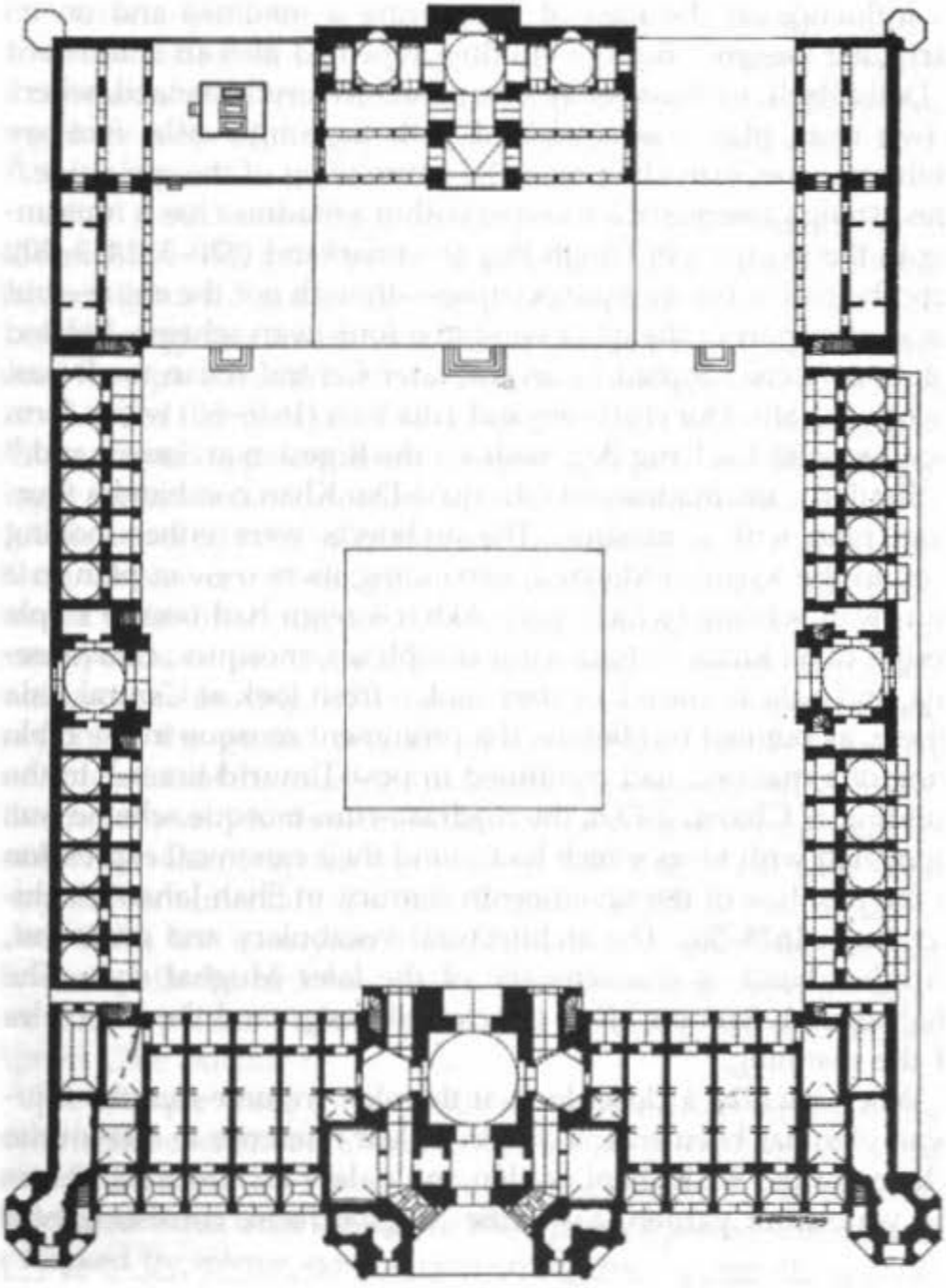
So far no plan of the madrasa has been published, therefore, I had two ground plans prepared, one of the entire building, and one of the mosque. The survey and drawings were carried out under my direction between April 2004 and March 2005 by Richard A. Barraud who has worked with me since 1982 on my project of documenting Mughal architecture, in particular the palaces and gardens built by Shah Jahan. The plans attempt to establish the original design and this is also the aim of the following discussion (Figs 1.2 and 1.5).

The madrasa consists of a rectangular courtyard building, measuring 69.40 × 96.20 m, with octagonal towers at its corners, the eastern ones being larger and functional. Three of its sides are formed by double-storeyed wings composed of rows of domed cells (hujra), preceded by arched porches. In the middle of each wing the modular sequence of the hujras is punctuated by an architectural unit with a domed hall in its centre, the eastern one forming the massive gate block. The central domed halls of the wings are preceded by large framed portal niches which open into the courtyard and correspond to what is called in general Islamic architectural terminology an iwan; the specific form of an arched niche in a rectangular frame is described as *pîshtâq*, literally fore arch. (An iwan was for the Mughals of the seventeenth century a pillared construction of any dimension and plan. The term was also used for a porch unit in front of a hujra).[32] On the fourth, the *qibla* side, is the wing of the mosque which also displays a central pishtaq towards the courtyard, acting as the fourth iwan.

In this, in its most basic description, namely a four-iwan plan, a massive entrance block, and symmetrical planning, the design revives in India once more the concept of the four-iwan madrasa as it had been formulated in the splendid madrasas of Khurasan and Central Asia, of Samarkand and Bukhara[33], where the patron Ghaziu'd-Din came from. It is likely that his place of origin had

32 See Ebba Koch, 'The Lost Colonnade of Shah Jahan's Bath in the Red Fort of Agra', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 124, no. 951, 1982, pp. 331–9; reprinted in Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 259.

33 Brandenburg, *Die Madrasa*, in particular, pp. 67–75; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, text vol., p. 87. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, pp. 226–34.



an influence on the idea of sponsoring a madrasa and on its particular design.[34] But the building type had also an antecedent at Delhi itself, in the already mentioned Khairu'l-Manazil, where a two iwan plan was combined with the single-aisle, five-bay Delhi mosque, extending over the entire wing of the qibla side.[35] This strong presence of a mosque within a madrasa has a forerunner in the madrasa of Ulugh Beg at Samarkand (820–3/1417–20); here the hall of the mosque occupies—though not the entire—but the greater part of the qibla wing in a four-iwan scheme. Related solutions were adopted in several later Central Asian madrasas, such as the Shir Dor (1619–36) and Tilla Kari (1646–60) which form together with the Ulug Beg madrasa the Rigestan at Samarkand.[36]

Similarly, the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan combines a four-iwan plan with a mosque. The architects were either looking back to the Khairu'l-Manazil, expanding its two iwan plan to a four-iwan scheme (which since Akbar's reign had been a staple design of all kinds of four-wing complexes, mosques, caravanserais, and palace courts), or they took a fresh look at Central Asia where, as pointed out before, the prominent mosque in the qibla wing of a madrasa had continued in post-Timurid times.[37] In the building of Ghaziu'd-Din, the madrasa-cum-mosque scheme was innovated with ideas which had found their canonical expression in the first half of the seventeenth century, in Shah Jahan's architecture (r. 1628–58). The architectural vocabulary and ornament, on other hand, is characteristic of the later Mughal style. The Shahjahani references effect the overall design and the principles of the planning.

When we take a closer look at the plan we note that the four-iwan plan has been enriched with a clear reference to a favourite scheme of the Shahjahani garden and palace architecture. This is the waterfront garden, a specific Mughal form, consisting of a

34 This connection has been made by Fanshawe, *Shah Jahan's Delhi*, p. 65, and Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, p. 274.

35 The type of mosque formed of massive bays arranged in a row with a larger bay in the centre was the characteristic form of the Delhi mosque; it had appeared first in the mosque of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, dated 1494. For a discussion of this type see Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, pp. 11–13. For a plan of the Khairu'l-Manazil, see Koch, *Mughal Architecture*, p. 63, fig. 57.

36 Hillenbrand, 'Architecture', in 'Madrasa,' EI2, p. 1149; idem., *Islamic Architecture*, pp. 230–4; Brandenburg, *Die Madrasa*, p. 69.

37 Brandenburg, *Die Madrasa*, pp. 67–74.

raised rectangular terrace on which are standing the main building and its flanking structures, combined on the landward side with a cross axial *châr bâgh*. The terrace is open to the river, the remaining three sides of the garden are enclosed by a wall with towers at its corners.[38]

After it had been monumentalized and idealized in the Taj Mahal (1632–48), the waterfront design became a module of Shah Jahan's gardens and palaces and was also employed for landlocked complexes, away from a river or lake front situation. When used for a palace court, the terrace-cum-charbagh ensemble could be enclosed (instead of with a simple wall) with three narrow wings, containing sequences of rooms. In the so-called Anguri Bagh, the main *zanâna* courtyard of the Agra Fort, the wings are double storeyed (1630s). In this way, the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan comes very close to a palace garden courtyard, and it also served residential purposes. Its square courtyard (54.5 × 54.5 m) corresponds to the charbagh element and originally also had a tank in the centre (Fig. 1.1). The tank thus served a double function, as pool of the garden and as ablution tank of the mosque. The interpretation of the courtyard as a garden is evident from Metcalfe's illustrations which show trees and planted beds (though not the tank). Also Carr Stephen mentions in 1876 that 'there were some very fine ornamental trees, but of these very few now remain'.[39] Until 2005, the courtyard was planted with trees, shrubs, and flowers while the tank had been turned into a lawn, and the space provided a pleasant change from the crowded urban area around Ajmeri Gate outside.[40]

The mosque wing corresponds to the riverfront terrace of the waterfront scheme. It is terraced, and the prayer hall stands as the main building in the centre on the highest level. As in the fully developed waterfront scheme of Shah Jahan's period, the mosque is flanked by mirror symmetrical structures, oblong elements in the form of double halls which act as extensions of the courtyard wings, but are separated from them by corridors.

38 Ebba Koch, 'The Mughal Waterfront Garden', in Attilio Petruccioli ed., *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires: Theory and Design*, Muqarnas Supplements, vol. 7, Leiden, New York, Köln, Brill, 1997, pp. 140–60; rpt. in Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*, pp. 183–202.

39 Stephen, *Archaeology and Monumental Remains*, p. 264.

40 It is to be hoped that the renovation will at least restore the garden character of the courtyard, even though the tank has been altered.

In Ghaziu'd-Din Khan we can thus detect the introduction of a waterfront scheme into a four-iwan plan. This represents not the only indebtedness to Shahjahani architecture. The entire ensemble follows formal criteria which found their canonical expression in Shah Jahan's buildings. Typical is the geometrical planning, the perfect bilateral symmetry which goes together with the hierarchical use of triadic proportional formulas and the employment of uniform shapes.[41]

What governs the entire design is the bilateral symmetrical arrangement on both sides of the central east-west axis. This central dominant axis is represented by singular elements: the mosque, the now disappeared tank, and the large entrance block of the gate wing; the courtyard wings are arranged on both sides in perfect correspondence to each other. This triadic scheme conforms to what Shah Jahan's historians called *qarîna*, or counter-image, a mirror symmetrical correspondence to both sides of a central axis on which are placed the dominant single elements.[42] Mosque and gate show in turn a tripartite division of a main feature, a domed hall preceded by a pîshtâq in the centre, flanked by identical elements.

The North and South Wing

The north and south wing (see Figs 1.1 and 1.3) correspond to each other. (The extension at the rear of the north wing in the form of wall niches seems to be of a later date.) Each wing is in turn symmetrical in itself on both sides of its own central axis, in this case the north-south axis of the building. Each wing is *c.* 7.45 m wide and formed of single rows of domed hujras preceded by arched porches. The latter is a feature which, as mentioned before, Shahjahani authors called iwan in a comparable architectural context, such as the

41 I have established these principles in my analysis of the Taj Mahal, see Ebba Koch, 'The Taj Mahal: Architecture, Symbolism and Urban Significance', *Muqarnas* 22 (2005), pp. 128–49; and in my *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2006, pp. 104–5.

42 Koch, *Mughal Architecture*, p. 141; Koch in Milo C. Beach, Ebba Koch, and Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama: An Imperial Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle*, London, Azimuth Editions; Washington DC, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1997, pp. 135, 143, n. 22, 167, 169 n. 5; Koch, *Complete Taj Mahal*, pp. 104–5.



Fig. 1.3. South wing and part of courtyard. Courtesy: Ebba Koch

ranges of the bazaars and caravanserais of the Taj Mahal.[43] The porches are composed of two arches of which the outer ones are multi-cusped, a form which, after having been canonized in Shahjahani architecture, had become the most widely used arch of the Mughal repertoire. Five hujra (arched porch units) are arranged on both sides of the central unit of the wing.

The central unit consists of a domed chamber preceded by its pishtaq, set off on both sides by mirror symmetrical staircases and oblong rooms (the staircases of the north wing begin with an L-shaped bent, the ones of the south wing lead up straight). In the elevation the pishtaq shows a monumental pointed arch without cusps, it is flanked by small ribbed domes over the landing of the stairways on the roof, only those of the south wing are preserved. As a sub-unit, the central block reflects again the triadic principle in plan and elevation.

At their respective ends both wings are set off by corridor pieces giving access to stairs leading to the upper level. Here the side

oblong vault, which, with a corresponding curved roof, was first used as a symbol of rulership in the architecture of appearances of Shah Jahan, then in a wide context.[44]

The north and south wing are set off in the east and west by means of transversal corridor pieces and in this way each wing of the madrasa reads on the plan as a unit of its own (Fig. 1.2). All wings relate to the courtyard which forms a perfect square, with a side length of 54.5 m to 54.5 m. The north wing and south wing, as side elements of the qarina composition correspond to each other, the east and west wing on the main axis are differentiated and have their own individuality.

The East Wing

The east wing, 16.50 m, is more than double as wide as the side wings and also far more complex. To complicate its reading, it has undergone intrusive alterations, and until further investigations are undertaken, I can only assess its original shape to a certain extent. On both of the courtyard sides of the massive gate block, series of rooms open into five arched porches, corresponding to those of the north and south wing. The porches on the outside front of the wing show deeper rooms behind the arches with a mirrored ceiling (flat ceilings connecting to the walls with a cavetto). Their back wall was originally probably closed, so as to hinder uncontrolled access into the school.

The central gate block has a complex plan composed of two elements. Towards the east, the outside, it projects as the open half of a *hasht bihisht* plan, the ninefold plan, a favourite of Mughal planning since Akbar.[45] What would be in the full plan the inner central hall acts here in the shape of an open half octagon as fore hall, projecting from the façade. Its side rooms in the west merge with a cruciform configuration, centred on a large square domed hall on the axis of the courtyard pishtaq (and the eastern fore hall). The west arm of this domed hall connects with the courtyard pishtaq, its north and south arms with hexagonal rooms through which corridors lead in the west to the court, and in the east, with a bend, into the outer fore hall. The gate has thus three

44 Koch, *Mughal Architecture*, pp. 94–5, with further literature; see also, p. 137.
45 Ibid., pp. 45–9.

passageways. Although mirror symmetry prevails, such complex composite configurations depart from the Shahjahani system.

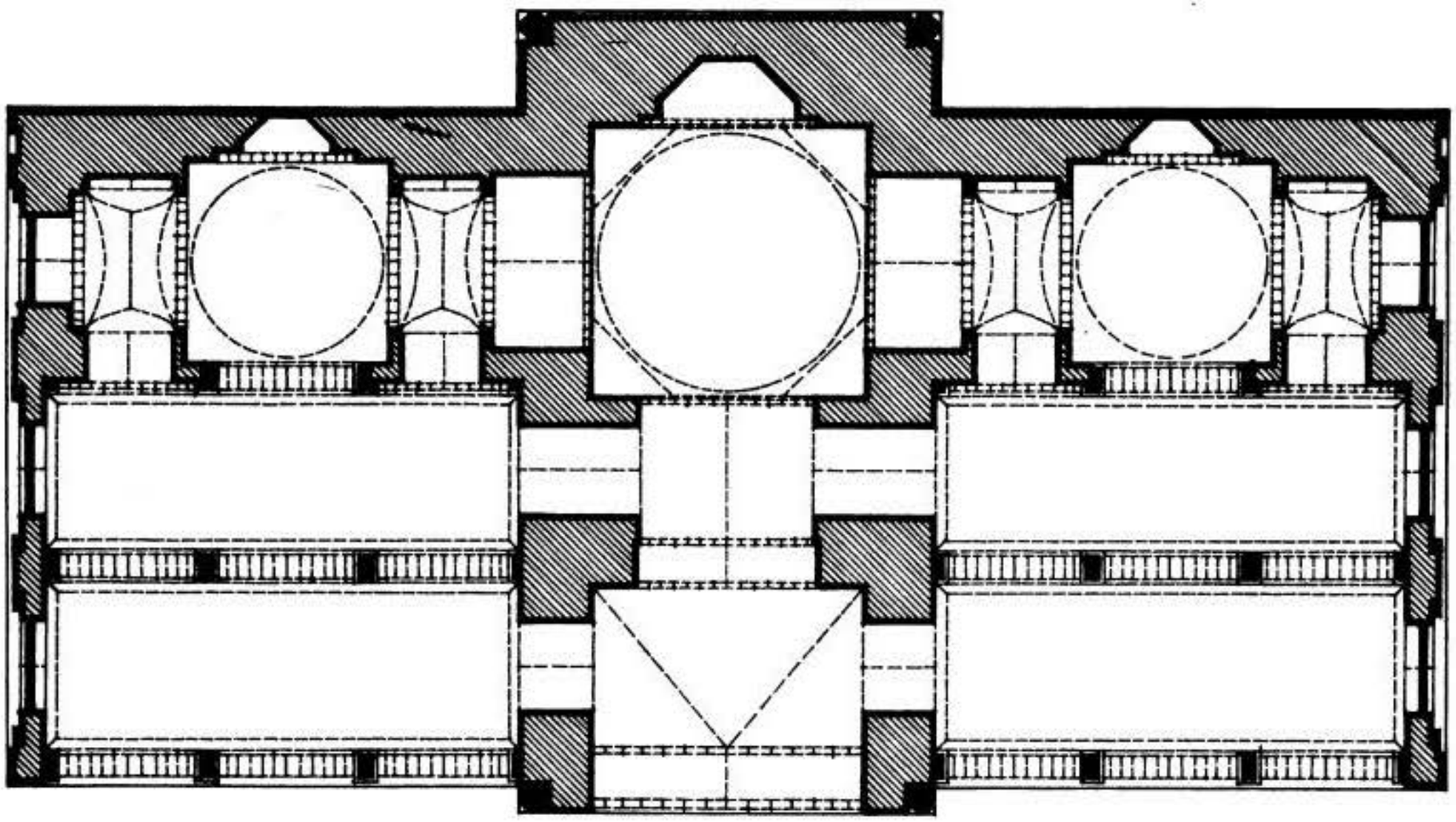
The outside elevation of the gate preserves its original form only on the lower level, its upper part was removed by the British,[46] and, according to Dr Jaffery, rebuilt before 1929 according to the design of a drawing teacher Muhammad Yusuf, who retired from the Anglo-Arabic School in 1960 (Fig. 1.4). The upper part follows the lower floor, both show niches with multi-cusped arches in the wall faces which are covered with red sandstone. On the courtyard side are projecting oriel windows with curved up bangla roofs on both sides of the central pishtaq.

The Mosque Wing

In the west on the qibla side is the wing of the mosque and its side buildings, all faced with red sandstone which distinguishes them from the plaster facing of the other courtyard wings and establishes a connection to the gate as the other dominant feature on the main axis. The mosque is the only freestanding building and the architectural showpiece of the courtyard (Figs 1.1, 1.5, and 1.6).



Fig. 1.5. Ground plan of the mosque of the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan, end of seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Drawing by Richard A. Barraud and Ebba Koch



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Consequently, its wing is the widest and measures 25.2 m across, not including the projection of the *mihrâb* in the west. The mosque wing consists of a raised stepped terrace accessible by steps from the courtyard. The central part with the prayer hall is the highest (2.14 m up from the main quadrangle). To its sides are slightly lower platforms, on the southern one is the enclosure with the tomb of the founder. These terrace parts are set off by oblong buildings. On the same level is the platform in front of the mosque, acting as its *sahn* (courtyard). It is, in turn, flanked by lower terrace units, 0.82 m up from the courtyard level, and also set off by side structures which form an extension of those on the higher level.

Most of the decorative efforts have been focused on the mosque and it preserves most of its original décor; because of the religious function the architecture has been less tampered with in the later periods than the courtyard wings.

The mosque is evolved from a Shahjahani type which is based on the single aisle multi-bayed Delhi mosque, already referred to it in the discussion of the Khairu'l-Manazil. In Shah Jahan's time the massive prayer hall had its pishtaq deepened, which allowed the introduction of fore halls on both of its sides, either by doubling the bays, as in the mosque and Mehman Khana of the Taj (1632–43) and Jahanara's Jami Masjid at Agra (1643–8),[47] or by the insertion of lighter continuous halls on both sides of the pishtaq, as in the Jami Masjid (1060–6/1650–6),[48] the mosques of Fatehpuri Begam (1060/1650) and of Zinatu'n-Nisa (1711–12), all at Shahjahanabad. The mosque of the madrasa of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan expands the latter version in that the massive block of the central domed chamber and pishtaq is even further deepened by the insertion of an additional arched room which allows the extension of the fore hall into double halls. Each consists of three arcades of rectangular pillars (Fig. 1.6).

These pillars represent a characteristic form of the later seventeenth century (Fig. 1.7). Their rectangular shaft grows out of a bulbuous 'calyx' of naturalistic leaves, borrowed from the Shahjahani baluster column, the tapering shaft of which forms a bulb of leaves at its bottom. Together with the bangla roof, the leaf decorated baluster column represented the most distinct element

47 For plans see Koch, *Complete Taj*, p. 184, Figs 266, 267; and Asher, *Architecture in Mughal India*, p. 191, plate 117.

48 Koch, *Mughal Architecture*, p. 119, Fig. 142.

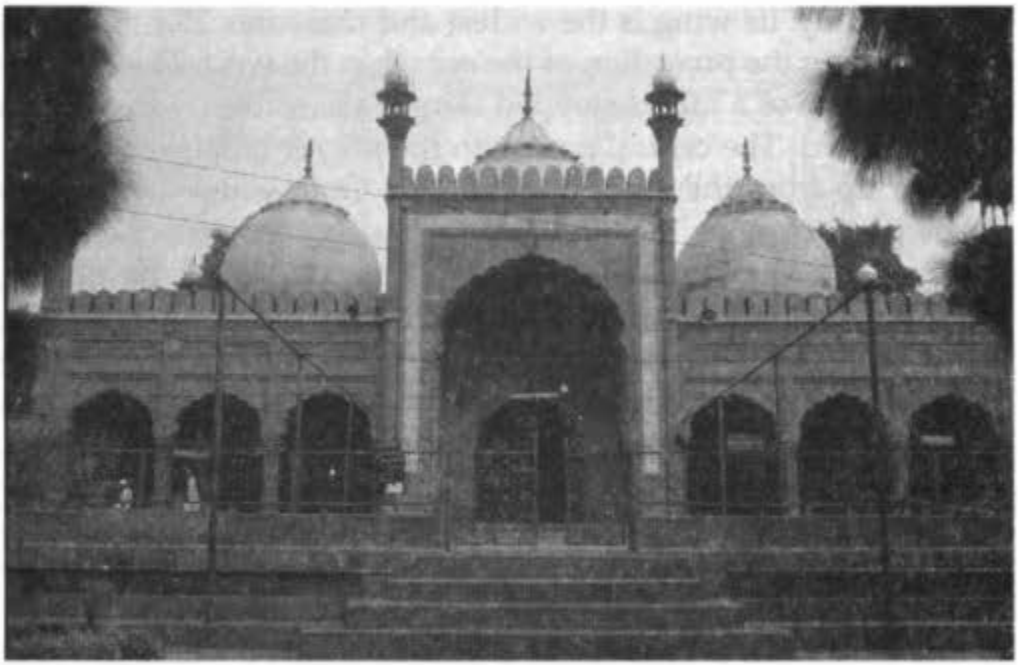


Fig. 1.6. Mosque from east. Courtesy: Ebba Koch

of the 'organic' imperial architectural vocabulary which had first been created for exclusive use in the architecture of Shah Jahan's appearances—it symbolized the concept that the emperor was the one who brought about growth, fecundity, and well-being.[49] Both baluster column and bangla became eventually the most widely employed elements of later Indian architecture where they played a major role in an increasing 'vegetabilization' of the vocabulary and décor. The bulbous extension and the decoration with acanthus and lotus leaves of the pillars of the mosque of the madrasa testify to this development, and also demonstrate that the 'classical' Shahjahani repertoire was modified by transferring the idea of the baluster column on to a rectangular pillar. All arches are multi-cusped.

The massive rear part of the prayer hall is formed of three domed units; in tune with the all permeating tripartite proportion-

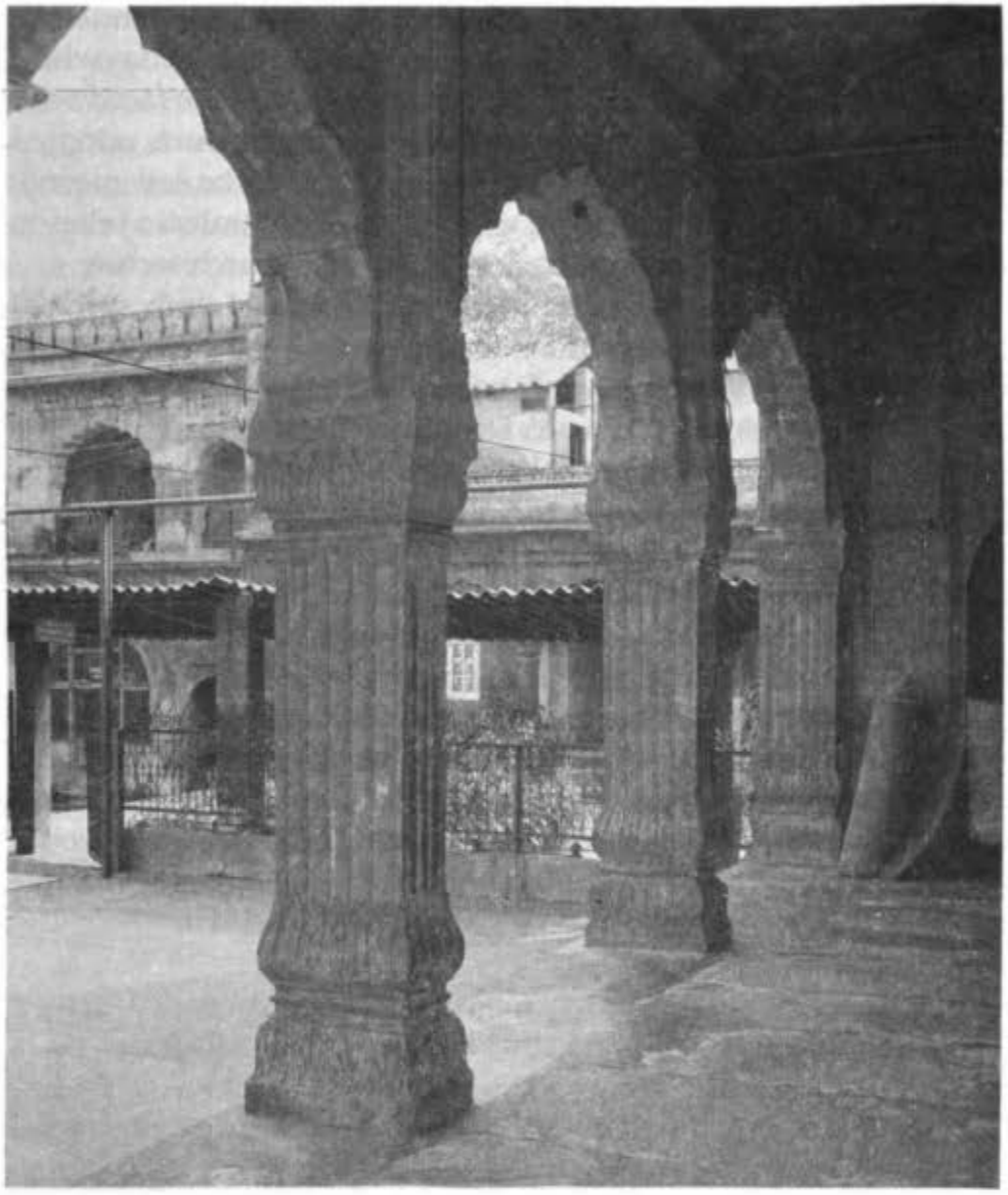


Fig. 1.7. Pillar of prayer hall. Courtesy: Ebba Koch

north and south, the side domes are flanked by oblong bays with

hollowed out and produce the effect of *muqarnas*. The pendentifs of the side domes are covered with similar netted muqarnas which generate the footline of the dome. Both side domes are faced with lotus leaves, an old vault lining of Indian architecture, adopted since Akbar by the Mughals. In the second half of the seventeenth century it was reactivated and expressed in naturalistic relief to enrich the general vegetabilization trend of the architecture.

The outer domes were originally perhaps faced with strips of red and black stone, as held by some,[51] but already the Metcalfe drawings show them as faced with grey plaster. Their present green colour goes, according to Dr Jaffery, back to the renovation efforts of a previous student. It became a permanent feature, when, taken for the original colour, the domes were repainted green for the film *Gandhi*, in 1980–1 in which the madrasa served as the setting for the Jalianwallah Bagh episode. Another distinct feature of the mosque elevation are the *guldastas* or pinnacles opening into calyxes, on which are placed octagonal chhatris. The shafts of the guldastas over the corners are square in plan and owe their shape to a similar formal development as the pillars of the prayer hall.

The mosque is flanked on both sides by oblong units composed of two double halls. They form extensions of the north and south wings of the courtyard but to show that they belong to the mosque they are differentiated in their plan and elevation. The structures on the immediate sides of the mosque reflect its elevation in that their verandas are opened into three multi-cusped arches. To the east follows a modular unit of Shahjahani palaces, a *bait* of a tripartite configuration of a central oblong room flanked by two hujras which is preceded by a continuous veranda of five arches formed of multi-cusped arches and rectangular pillars of a similar shape than those of the mosque.

The Tomb of Ghaziu'd-Din Khan

In the terrace compartment to the south of the mosque is the tomb of the founder in a double enclosure of beautiful floral *jâlî* screens. For Fanshawe, who described it in 1902, this corner was 'perhaps, quite one of the most picturesque bits in Delhi.'[52]

51 Asher, *Architecture in Mughal India*, p. 275.
52 Fanshawe, *Shah Jahan's Delhi*, p. 65.

The outer enclosure is generated by two sandstone screens set between the south wall of the mosque and the side wing. They are formed of rectangular compartments containing arches filled with open floral work and are topped by similarly jali-ed parapets set between baluster colonettes of the classical Shahjahani shape. Both screens have real doors in the south, and blind doors in the north, near the mosque. The blind doors show panels with naturalistic flowery plants in sandstone relief. To tune in with the floral mode of the space, the arches in the south wall of the mosque are also filled with exquisite screens showing flowers in open work (Fig. 1.8) similar to the ones of the doors, and set into a framework of rectangular panels. The flowers are derived from naturalistic Shahjahani architectural décor which had found its apogee in the dados of the Taj Mahal; it was to symbolize paradisiacal bloom as a desired setting for the deceased. The inner enclosure, which contains the tombstone of the founder between two other tombs, is made of simple marble jalis (Fig. 1.9). It demonstrates once more the principle of tripartite division in that each of its sides is formed of a door (or blind door) flanked by two lower panels. The doors and the engaged corner shafts are topped by baluster colonettes. The northern screen of the enclosure is now sadly missing.





Fig. 1.9. Tomb enclosure of the founder from south-east, painted by Sita Ram, 1815, inscribed 'Another view of the Madrissa and Tombs within its enclosure at Delhi' (41.1 × 52.4 cm), Add. Or. 4818. By permission of the British Library, London

This form of open burial conforms to the *hazîra* or enclosure tomb, a more orthodox form of burial, adopted by Babur and Aurangzeb, in contradistinction to the great imperial mausoleums. It was used by members of the imperial family and the nobility in the later Mughal period.

Below the platform on the opposite of the north side, are underground rooms, *tahkhânas*, now called *sardâba*[53] or *sardâwa*.

Conclusion

madrasa and brings significant innovations to the time honoured scheme. At the end of the seventeenth century it demonstrates that the principles of the Shahjahani system of perfect symmetry and proportional divisions were not a dead canon but could still bring forth creative solutions, by merging a four-iwan plan with the riverfront garden design, and by the clear definition of the individuality of the wings which culminates in the unprecedented position of a mosque building in a four-iwan madrasa scheme.

2

Transculturation, Assimilation, and its Limits

The Rise and Fall of the Delhi White Mughals 1805–57

William Dalrymple

On 16 September 1803, Lord Lake, the commander-in-chief of the British army, was escorted into the Red Fort of Shahjahanabad. There he was warmly received by the blinded and powerless Mughal emperor, Shah Alam, the unfortunate ruler described by Azad as 'only a chessboard king'.[1] Shah Alam congratulated Lake on his victory over the Marathas, and bestowed on him the title Samsamu'd-Daula—the Sword of the State. During the discussions which followed, it was agreed that the British should open a permanent residency in Delhi.[2] Eight days later, the new resident, Sir David Ochterlony, a Boston-born general in the army of the East India Company, took up residence in the ruins of an old Mughal building which had once been the library of the Sufi prince, Dara Shukoh, eldest son of Shah Jahan.

1 Quoted in Frances W. Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics*, Berkeley, 1994, p. 3.

2 K.N. Panikkar, *British Diplomacy in Northern India: A Study of the Delhi Residency, 1803–1857*, New Delhi, 1968, p. 7.

The governor general, Lord Wellesley, was well aware of the prestige that protecting the Mughal emperor would bring to the rising fortunes of the Company: 'Notwithstanding His Majesty's total deprivation of real power, dominion, and authority,' he wrote, 'almost every state and every class of people in India continue to acknowledge his nominal sovereignty. The current coin of every established power is struck in the name of Shah Alam....'[3] He made it clear he 'recoiled from the thought of it being suspected in England' that he wished to 'place the East India Company, substantially or vicariously, on the throne of the Moghuls' and Lord Lake was instructed to offer his 'loyalty...and every demonstration of reverence, respect and attention' to the aged monarch. The new resident also received strict instructions that he too was to use all the forms 'considered to be due to the Emperors of Hindustan'.[4]

The British had occasionally sent diplomats to Delhi in the past—Warren Hastings for example had sent James Browne to the Mughal court in 1782, and four years later William Kirkpatrick had also spent several months in the Red Fort as resident at the Court of Sindhia.[5] But in 1803 Delhi was still largely off the British map, unexplored and unwritten. Ochterlony found himself one of the first British residents in a grand and ancient city depopulated by a century of war and insecurity, and looted by a succession of marauders, but still full of reminders of the magnificence of its past.[6]

The approach to the city set the tone. For miles in every direction, half collapsed and overgrown, robbed and reoccupied, tottering and disintegrating, neglected by all, lay the remains of 600 years of Indian imperium. *Hammams* (Turkish bath, bath house) and palaces, thousand-pillared halls and mighty tomb towers, empty

3 Quoted in J.K. Majumdar, *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls: A Selection from Official Records, 1803–1859*, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 319–20.

4 Majumdar, *Raja Rammohun Roy*, p. 4.

5 Michael H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764–1858*, Oxford, 1991, p. 133 for Browne; also: Browne Correspondence; ed. by Krishna Dayal Bhargava, New Delhi, 1960. Sir Jadunath Sarker (ed.), *English Records of Mahratta History: Pune Residency Correspondence, Vol. 1: Mahadji Scindhia and North Indian Affairs, 1785–1794*, Bombay, 1936, p. 111, letter 65. James Anderson to William Kirkpatrick (henceforth WK), Sindhia's Camp, Shergarh, 5 December 1786 and ibid., p. 131, Letter 78, Cornwallis to WK, Calcutta, 1 March 1787.

6 One of the only sources of information about Delhi at this period was a report by Lieutenant William Franklin in the 1795 edition of the new *Asiatick Researches*.

mosques and semi-deserted Sufi shrines: there seemed to be no end to the litter of ages, the vanity projects of a hundred forgotten sultans, the products of the piety of a thousand long-dead Shaikhs. 'The prospect towards Delhi, as far as the eye can reach is covered with the crumbling remains of gardens, pavilions, mosques and burying places,' wrote Lieutenant William Franklin in 1795. 'The environs of this once magnificent and celebrated city appear now nothing more than a shapeless heap of ruins....'[7] It was a similar scene inside the city walls. The mansions of the nobles were larger than the city palaces of any European nobles, but they lay in a state of terminal disrepair and untended, collapsing on every side. In the palace itself, the greatest treasures of the Red Fort had all been removed by Nadir Shah in 1739; 50 years later, in the summer of 1788, the marauder Ghulam Qadir personally blinded the emperor, and then threw vinegar in the wounds by carting off his fabulous library (most of which he then sold to the nawab of Awadh, much to the emperor's fury).[8] The costumes of the court were threadbare and the precious stones had been picked out of the pietra dura work of the imperial apartments. A blind emperor ruled from a ruined palace; the most talented poets and artists had fled to Lucknow (with the single important exception of the mystic poet Mir Dard). Only those too old or decrepit or impoverished to leave remained.

Nor was it just the travellers who looked with sadness at this vast crumbling necropolis. Delhi-*wallahs*, particularly those who remembered better days, wept at the fate of their ransacked city: 'How can I describe the desolation of Delhi,' asked the poet Sauda in 1761. 'There is no house from which the jackal's cry cannot be heard. The mosques at evening are unlit and deserted. In the once beautiful gardens, the grass grows waist-high around fallen pillars and ruined arches.'

7 Lieutenant William Franklin in the 1795 edition of the new *Asiatick Researches*.

8 British Library (BL), London, Warren Hastings papers, William Palmer to Warren Hastings, Add MSS 29,172, vol. xli, 1790, p. 184, 21 November 1790 Agra: 'I applied to the Shah [Alam] in your name for permission to transcribe his copy of the Mahbharrut , and was assured that it would have been most cheerfully granted if the book had been in his possession, but his library had been totally plundered & destroyed by that villain Ghullam Khauder Khan, and he added, not without some degree of indignation, that part of the books had been purchased at Lucknow, that is by the Vizier; & upon enquiry find this to be the case, for his Excellency produced some of them to the English Gentlemen, boasting that they were the "King's".'

The first Company officials who settled in these melancholy ruins were a series of sympathetic and notably eccentric figures. Politically they saw the value of the Mughal dynasty for its time-honoured legitimizing power. Personally they were deeply attracted to the high courtly culture which Delhi still represented. Sir David Ochterlony set the tone. He was a man already well used to living on the faultlines between different worlds. Ochterlony's father was a Highland Scot who had settled in Massachusetts. When the American Revolution broke out, the family fled to Canada, and David entered the Company's army in 1777. He never returned to the New World, and having made India his home vowed never to leave it.

With his fondness for hookahs and nautch girls and Indian costumes, Ochterlony amazed Bishop Reginald Heber, the Anglican Primate of Calcutta, by receiving him sitting on a divan wearing Hindustani pyjamas and a turban, while being fanned by servants holding a peacock feather *pankha* (fan). To one side of Ochterlony's own tent was the red silk harem tent where Ochterlony's women slept, and on the other side the encampment of his daughters, all according to the bishop, 'hung around with red cloth and thus fenced in from the eyes of the profane'. Ochterlony's cortege, which the bishop later spotted on the move through the country of Rajputana, was equally remarkable. 'There was a considerable number of horses, elephants, palanquins and covered carriages,' wrote Heber.

> [As well as] an escort of two companies of infantry, a troop of regular cavalry, and I should guess forty or fifty irregulars, on horse and foot, armed with spears and matchlocks of all possible forms; the string of camels [and elephants] was a very long one as if it was an Eastern prince travelling.... Certainly Ochterlony maintains an almost kingly state: his income from different sources is little less than 15,000 rupees and he spends almost all of it....
>
> Sir David himself was in a carriage and four. He is a tall and pleasing looking old man, but was so wrapped up in shawls, Kincob fur and a Mogul furred cap, that his face was all that was visible.... He has been absent from his home country about 54 years; he has there neither friends nor relations, and he has been for many years habituated to Eastern habits and parade. And if he shows no sign of retiring and returning to Britain who can wonder that he clings to the only country in the world where he can feel himself at home?[9]

9 Reginald Heber, *A Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824–1825*, 3 vols, London, 1828, vol. 2, pp. 362 and 392.

Although the people of Delhi knew Ochterlony as 'Loony Akhtar' (or Crazy Star), when in the Indian capital he liked to be addressed by his full Mughal title, Nasiru'd Daula (Defender of the State) and to live the life of a Mughal gentleman. A miniature survives depicting an evening's entertainment at the Delhi Residency in this period. Ochterlony is dressed in full Indian costume and reclines on a carpet, leaning back against a spread of pillows and bolsters. To one side stands a servant with a flywhisk; on the other stands Ochterlony's elaborate hubble-bubble. Above, from the picture rail, portraits of the resident's Scottish and American ancestors—kilted and plumed colonels from Highland regiments, grimacing Boston ladies in stiff white taffeta dresses—peer down disapprovingly at the group of dancing girls swirling below them. Ochterlony, however, looks delighted.[10]

Though Ochterlony is reputed to have had 13 wives,[11] one of these, a former Brahmin dancing girl from Pune who converted to Islam and is referred to in his will as 'Beebee Mahruttun Moobaruck ul Nissa Begume, alias Begam Ochterlony, the mother of my younger children',[12] took precedence over any others.[13]

10 Oriental India Office Collection, London (henceforth OIOC) Add. Or 1. See Mildred Archer, *Company drawings in the India Office Library*, London, 1972. Plate D (opp. p. 166) and p. 201.

11 Sadly this much repeated and thoroughly delightful story may well be apocryphal: certainly I have been unable to trace it back further than Edward Thompson's *The Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe*, London, 1937, p. 101, where it is described as 'local tradition...this sounds like folklore'. It may well have been inspired by the famous miniature of Ochterlony in the India Office Library. In his will, OIOC L/AG/34/29/37, Ochterlony only mentions one *bibi*, 'Mahruttun, entitled Moobaruck ul Nissa Begam and often called Begam Ochterlony', who was the mother of his two daughters, although his son Roderick Peregrine Ochterlony was clearly born of a different bibi. Nevertheless it is quite possible that the story could be true: I frequently found Old Delhi traditions about such matters confirmed by research, and several Company servants of the period kept harems of this size. Judging by Bishop Heber's description of him, Ochterlony was clearly Indianized enough to have done so.

12 Bengal Wills, 1825, OIOC, L/AG/34/29/37, pp. 185–205.

13 For Mubarak Begam's background see the Mubarak Bagh papers in the Archives of the Delhi Commissioner's Office: D.C.O F.5/1861. Here it is recorded that 'Mubarik ul Nissa was originally a girl of Brahmin parentage, who was brought from Poona in the Deckan by one Mosst. Chumpa, and presented or sold by the said Chump to Genl. Ochterlony when 12 years of age. Mosst. Mubarik ul Nissa from that time resided in Genl. Ochterlony's house, and Mosst. Chumpa resided with her there, being known by the name of Banbahi.'

'Generallee Begum', as she was also known, occasionally appears in contemporary letters, where she is frequently accused of giving herself airs. She offended the British by calling herself 'Lady Ochterlony'—in one letter it is recorded that 'Lady Ochterlony has applied for leave to make the Hadge to Mecca'—and also offended the Mughals by awarding herself the title Qudsia Begam, previously the title of the emperor's mother.[14]

She even seems to have set herself up as a power in her own right, and to have engaged in her own independent foreign policy: at one point it was reported that 'Mobarruck Begam alias Generalee Begam fills the [Delhi] papers with accounts of the Nizars and Khiluts [gifts and dresses of honour] given and taken by her in her transactions with the vaqueels [ambassadors] of the different [Indian] powers'—an extraordinary liberty if true.[15] Much younger than Ochterlony, she certainly appears to have had the upper hand in her relationship with the old general, and one observer remarked 'that making Sir David Commissioner [of Delhi was the same as] making Generallee Begam'.[16] Elsewhere it is remarked that Ochterlony's mistress 'is the mistress now of everyone within the walls....'[17]

While Ochterlony's principal residence was Dara Shukoh's ruined library—rapidly given a Georgian facelift, and filled with British furnishings, including an 1815 billiard table—weekends were spent amid the rills of Shah Jahan's beautiful Shalimar Gardens, the spot where Aurangzeb had been made Mughal emperor in 1657. In his first years in Delhi, Ochterlony built a spread of neoclassical bungalows here and encouraged his assistants to do likewise.

Later in the 1820s Ochterlony also began to construct an extraordinary garden tomb in the Mughal garden he had had built for Mubarak Begam, on land he purchased from his assistant William Fraser especially for her,[18] a short distance to the south of Shalimar

14 Gardner Papers, National Army Museum (NAM), Letter 16, p. 42.

15 Ibid., Letter 87, p. 226, 10 August 1821.

16 Ibid., Letter 90, 16 August 1821.

17 Ibid., Letter 16, p. 42.

18 Fraser Papers, Inverness Bundle 351: Letters from David Ochterlony to William Fraser, 28 January 1821—Folio 10: 'The trouble is I wish to make it Milkunt as much as possible as the Person for whom I buy it (My Lady) like all other Natives will not consider it good property if it is not exempt from any Tarqahr whatsoever.'

Bagh. Ochterlony's tomb is a wonderfully hybrid monument, whose central dome was apparently the model for the Delhi church, St James, and was, suitably enough, surmounted by a cross, but the side wings are enclosed in a forest of small minarets: the perfect architectural expression of the religious fusion Ochterlony seems to have achieved in his marriage. In the event, Ochterlony died away from Delhi and was buried in Meerut, while the empty tomb was destroyed during the Mutiny, in which Mubarak Begam, by then remarried to a Mughal *amir* named Wilayat 'Ali Khan, fought on the Mughal side. But it is an extraordinary and completely forgotten moment in architectural history: the last of the great Mughal garden tombs—a tradition that reached its finest moment in the Taj Mahal—being built not by the last of the Mughals, but by a Scottish American general.[19]

Although Ochterlony's life in Delhi sounds enviably sybaritic, beneath the surface, however, seem to have lain the sort of tensions that affect anyone who straddles two very different and diverging worlds. One of the most moving of Ochterlony's letters concerns his two daughters, and the question of whether he should bring them up Muslim or Christian. The letter is written to Major Hugh Sutherland, a Scottish mercenary commanding a regiment of Maratha's troops who, like Ochterlony, had married a Muslim begam—and who had opted to bring up his children as Muslim.

Ochterlony writes that he did not know what to do with his two daughters by Mubarak Begam, and asks for advice. If they are brought up as Christians, he fears they will suffer from the racism of the British: 'My children dear Major,' writes Ochterlony, 'are uncommonly fair, but if educated in the European manner they will in spite of complexion labour under all the disadvantages of being known as the NATURAL DAUGHTERS OF OCHTERLONY BY A NATIVE WOMAN—In that one sentence is compressed all that ill nature, inaction and illiberality can convey of which you must have seen numerous instances during your Residence in this country.'

Yet for all this, Ochterlony says he still hesitates to bring them up as Muslims, with a view to them marrying into the Mughal aristocracy as 'I own I could not bear that my child should be one

19 There is a picture of the tomb in Emily Bayley's *The Golden Calm: An English Lady's Life in Moghul Delhi*, London, 1980, p. 181.

of a numerous haram even were I certain that no other Disadvantages attended this mode of disposal & were I proof against the observations of the world who tho' unjust to the children, would not fail to comment on the Conduct of a father who educated his offspring in Tenets of the Prophet.' The letter ends rather movingly: 'In short my dear M[ajor] I have spent all the time since we were parted in revolving this matter in my mind but I have not yet been able to come to a positive Decision.'[20]

Ochterlony was not, however, alone—either in his Indianized tastes, or the dilemmas and problems this precipitated in his relations with his more orthodox compatriots. When the formidable Lady Maria Nugent, wife of the new British Commander-in-Chief in India, visited Delhi she was horrified by what she saw there. It was not just Ochterlony who had 'gone native', she reported, his assistants William Fraser and Edward Gardner were even worse. She writes in her journal:

I shall now say a few words of Messrs. Gardner and Fraser who are still of our party. They both wear immense whiskers, and neither will eat beef or pork, being as much Hindoos as Christians, if not more; they are both of them clever and intelligent, but eccentric; and, having come to this country early, they have formed opinions and prejudices, that make them almost natives. In our conversations together, I endeavour to insinuate every thing that I think will have any weight with them. I talk of the religion they were brought up in, and of their friends, who would be astonished and shocked at their whiskers, beards, &c. &c. All this we generally debated between us and I still hope they will think of it.[21]

Fraser, a Persian scholar from Inverness who had just won the Gold Medal at the Company's new Fort William College, arrived in Delhi on the 5 January 1806, after a perilous journey overland from Allahabad. 'On the road I passed several parties of armed men whom I knew to be plunderers,' William later wrote to his

20 Sutherland Papers, OIOC, Mss. Eur. D. 547, pp. 133–4. The letter is undated but is probably *c.* 1801–2, and it must immediately predate the Anglo-Maratha War of 1803.

21 Lady Maria Nugent, *Journal of a Residence in India 1811–15*, 2 vols, London, 1839; vol. 2, p. 9.

father. 'I always passed any who I met at a very quick pace.... They generally keep about 100 yards [away] and fire with their matchlocks and are so expert that your only chance is in moving about to avoid their fire or riding straight upon them with your pistol. I talk of them when mounted; footmen robbers never show themselves but fire from some ambush.'[22]

When he finally arrived, 'six months and a day after leaving Calcutta' in time to 'breakfast with Ochterlony' in the new Residency, William was astounded by what he saw: the groaning ruins of dynasty after dynasty lay scattered for 30 miles across the plain:

> The immense extent of ruins which appear all around offer a melancholy picture of the former opulence and population of the city. Archways, porticoes and gateways are all reduced to heap of desolation...I wish to ascertain historically the account of every remarkable place or monument of antiquity, or building erected in commemoration of singular acts of whatever nature. The traditional accounts I receive from natives are generally absurd or contradictory. I must first know how they obtained credence, and then search for the origins of the story.[23]

In pursuit of this quest, William soon began searching out the scholars and poets of the city, and before long gained a reputation for 'consorting with the grey beards of Delhi...almost all of them Mussulmauns of Mogul extraction, the wreck of the nobility of that court'.[24] As he wrote home to his parents on the 8 February 1806, in his first letter describing Delhi:

> My time is now spent very pleasantly and...my situation is as desirable as any one I could hold, nor should I care if I lived here during the whole period of my sojournment in India.... The business of my situation generally takes up five hours a day. [Afterwards] I read and study with pleasure the languages. They are the chief source of my amusement, [although] Delhi affords much [other] food besides. Learned natives there are a few, and in poverty, but those I have met with are real treasures. I am also making a good collection of oriental manuscripts.[25]

22 Fraser Papers (private collection, Inverness, as listed by the National Register of Archives, Scotland), vol. 29. Letter from William Fraser to his father, 6 January 1806.

23 Fraser Papers, vol. 29. Letter from William Fraser (WF) to his father, 20 March 1806.

24 Victor Jacquemont (VJ), *Letters from India, 1829–32*, 2 vols, trans., Catherine Phillips, London, Macmillan, 1936. VJ to his father, Delhi, 10 January 1831, p. 344–5.

25 Fraser Papers, vol. 29, Letter from WF to his father, 8 February 1806.

Among these 'learned natives' with whom Fraser became intimate were Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz of the madrasa of Rahimiyya, with whom William read Persian, and Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda, who held weekly poetic mushairas and who later became an important figure in the Delhi College.[26] William was also close to the poet Ghalib, who later wrote that when Fraser died, he 'felt afresh the grief of a father's death'.[27]

Slowly, William changed out of all recognition from the callow youth who had left Calcutta. He pruned his moustaches in the Rajput manner and according to one traveller, fathered 'as many children as the King of Persia...Hindus and Muslims according to the religion and caste of their mamas, and...shepherds, peasants, mountaineers according to the occupation of their mother's family' from his harem of 'six or seven legitimate [Indian] wives who all live together some fifty leagues from Delhi'.[28]

Often on the move, and living under canvass, he grew into a great bear of a man, brilliant but wild and uncontrollable. One of his colleagues at the Delhi Residency, Charles Metcalfe, warned that he was 'capable of great good, if waywardness did not spoil all'.[29] Later Metcalfe wrote a fuller estimate for his boss, the Governor General Lord Bentinck, who on a visit to Delhi had been alarmed by Fraser's outlandish appearance and written to Metcalfe to learn more about this strange man:

> He is unsteady and self-willed to so great a degree, that no power can be entrusted to him without some risk of it being abused, and he might drag the government into mischief before they had means of avoiding it. But he can be, when he chuses, exceedingly amiable & would have no difficulties in dealing with the higher order of natives with some of whom he has been more intimate than Europeans generally are. If he were free from the faults which I have mentioned, he might be the most valuable servant of the State, for he is very capable.[30]

Another British observer put it rather more succinctly: 'Fraser is a *sukht banchod* [a right sister-fucker]...such an obstinate fellow....

26 Avril A. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, London, 1993, pp. 52–3.

27 Ralph Russell and Khurshid Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters*, Delhi, 1994, p. 53.

28. Jacquemont, *Letters From India, 1829–32*, p. 354.

29 Bentinck Papers, Nottingham University, Charles Metcalfe to Lord W. Bentinck, PW JF 1551, Calcutta, 13 March 1831.

30 Ibid., PW JF 1624/1, Calcutta, 18 January 1832.

They mean to do something with him [i.e. promote him] but he is of such unbending stuff that he would refuse everything.'[31] Even his own brother admitted that

> sent out early into the world, almost an uncontrolled master of his own actions, never stinted in anything he wanted to do or possess, his passions and desires, always evident, have been misused instead of being brought under proper regulation, and ever accustomed to indulging them he feels any check to them as one upon his liberty & cannot submit to it. His indulgence has had a fatal effect on his happiness, for the appetite of self-gratification whether in laudable or improper pursuit has had the usual concomitant effect of that practice, creating longer and greater intervals of depression between which each require a stronger stimulus than the other to retrieve.[32]

Perhaps the most balanced portrait of him to survive is from the pen of the pioneering French botanist, Victor Jacquemont, who wrote that he found William the most interesting and intelligent of all the Company servants he met in his travels in India:

> [Fraser is] half-asiatick in his habits, but in other respects a Scotch Highlander, and an excellent man with great originality of thought, a metaphysician to boot, and enjoying the best possible reputation of being a country bear.... But for certain oddities of character, [he] would hold a higher post than he does here.... This man, who is generally regarded as a misanthrope though everybody in India does justice to his great qualities and talents, I found the most sociable of men. He is a thinker who finds nothing but solitude in that exchange of words without ideas which is dignified by the name of conversation in the society of this land, so he rarely frequents it. He has travelled a great deal, and always alone, because, he told me, he has never found a companion to his taste.
>
> For my part, the only thing I find odd about him is a perfect monomania for fighting. Whenever there is a war anywhere he throws up his judicial functions and goes off to it. He is always the leader in an attack, in which capacity he has earned two fine sabre cuts on the arms, a wound in the back from a pike, and an arrow in the neck which almost killed him. This is the price he has paid for always extricating himself from the frays into which he has rushed without being forced to kill a single man; to me that was the finest thing in his whole story—that and his humaneness. To him the most pleasurable emotion is that aroused by danger: such is the explanation of what people call his madness. It goes without saying that possessing this type of courage, M Fraser is the most pacific of men. In spite of his great black beard you would take him as a Quaker....

31 Gardner Papers, NAM, 6305–56, Letter 90 Babel, 16 August 1821.
32 Fraser Papers, bundle 303. James's diary for 5 October 1820.

What makes him such a desirable companion is that, being a man of superior intelligence, enriched by long experience in various branches of the Indian administration, he has a mass of facts to tell me, besides settling doubts and clearing up mysteries connected with the working of this extraordinary system of government. His mode of life has made him more familiar, perhaps, than any other European with the customs and ideas of the native inhabitants. He has, I think, a real and profound understanding of their inner life, such as is possessed by few others. Hindustani and Persian are like his two own mother tongue.... He is an original who really should be exhibited for a fee, but is a very good fellow, whom I love as I do none of his other fellow-countrymen.... If I were to describe all his eccentricities I should never come to the end of them, but he is a profound thinker withal.[33]

Certainly, his brothers were as surprised as any by the way he transformed himself: 'William is fine,' wrote his brother Alec after he arrived in Delhi in 1811:

I never saw one have so fine a constitution—his chest is wonderfully broad and round, his limbs full and well turned—and if he would only be a little reasonable, he might ensure unfailing health; but he invites illness by inconsiderate and continual exposure to the sun and all extremes of climate.... If he would be moderate on horseback, in exercise and exposure, and not attack tigers on foot—which all rational men, Europeans and natives in this country, consider little removed from an act of madness—I should have no fear for him...[but sadly] my hints have been invariably received with contempt....[34]

A few years later, in 1815, William was joined in Delhi by a third brother, the artist James Baillie Fraser. James had already heard many rumours of William's fondness for Indian customs:

I enquired of Brown how far he gave into the customs & manners of the natives. He says he does not think he has done it much more than others who live up there, except as far as he is rather more enthusiastic from mixing with natives to achieve his ends he has become more attached to them. He wears moustachios, so does Gardner, & all the others up there, but he does not wear the native dress; on the contrary Brown told me he wore when he last saw him what might be equally strange—a red coat and two epaulettes as Col of the corps of horse he raised himself....[35]

33 Jacquemont, *Letters From India, 1829–32*, pp. 150–1, 354

34 Fraser Papers, vol. 33, Alec Fraser (AF) to his father, p. 294, 4 November 1811, on the Ganges.

35 Ibid., bundle 34, Letters from James B. Fraser (JBF) to his mother, 22 July 1813, Folio 40.

This did not in fact turn out to be entirely true. Not only did Fraser frequently wear Mughal clothes—James found him 'in the usual morning dress of the country—a pair of loose drawers & a sort of morning gown cut in the native fashion and called the ungurca; nothing on his neck, a purple foraging hat on his head; large whiskers'—his house too was thoroughly Indianized: 'A curiosity,' thought James, 'tygres skins, caps of tygres heads, saddle cloths of ditto, quantities of saddlery, matchlocks, bows and arrows, quivers, belts, armours, guncases...Persian books and Indian curiosities of all sorts filled up the place.'[36] James concluded that 'his knowledge of the country and the natives [is such], and his habits are so assimilated that he can do what no other man would think of attempting.'[37]

However much this crossing of cultures may initially have surprised James, Delhi soon worked its spell on him too. He had already been producing sketches which he planned to publish, a project which was to come to fruition in two series of aquatints, one on Calcutta, the other of the Himalayas. What he saw in Delhi inspired him to dream of producing a third volume, this time of views of the old Mughal capital. Certainly his letters home echoed his brother's awe of the monuments which littered the Delhi plains. 'I have been of late literally stunned by views of mosques and tombs and ruins, wrecks of Delhi's former greatness,' he wrote to his father. 'All the country is covered with a vast variety of tombs of all descriptions, some of great beauty.... Years would be required to survey all that is worthy of attention. In comparison all our Gothic castles and Roman fortifications sink into nothing....'[38]

James had been in Calcutta and had come across the custom, initiated by Lord and Lady Impey, and by 1815 well established, of commissioning Indian artists to paint detailed records for their European patrons. During his stay in Delhi James commissioned a number of Delhi artists to paint Delhi figures and monuments, probably as aide memoirs for his projected aquatint series. While the figure paintings have survived, and now form the celebrated Fraser Album, generally recognized as the most remarkable series

36 Ibid., bundle 3, JBF to his mother, Camp before Jytock, 30 March 1815.
37 Ibid., vol. 24, JBF to his mother, Hansee, 30 October 1820.
38. Ibid., Bundle 3, James Baillie Fraser to his father, 3 October 1815.

of Company School pictures in existence,[39] the architectural studies have sadly been lost.

In the rest of India, dressing in Indian clothes, marrying Indian women, and engaging with Indian culture were rapidly going out of fashion. Indeed on occasion the practice had already led to the careers of some of the worst offenders, such as General William Palmer, being prematurely curtailed.[40] But under Ochterlony and Fraser, Delhi held out against the trend. When Ochterlony returned to Delhi in the 1820s he found that Fraser had also returned from a spell in Haryana, and was now more firmly entrenched than ever. Thrown together by tastes and outlook as well as by circumstances, the two became firm friends. As William wrote in 1821:

> I am now in my old place and business, with a better salary and more independent functions. Had I indeed made an appointment for myself it would have been the one I now have. I live on little, happily; and save about £4000 a year. I find that I have upwards a million fellow creatures and the most interesting district in India, wholly under me; and with the utmost power to do good and prevent oppression. In fact no situation in India could be more enviable. Old Ochterlony and myself get on remarkably well; and we begin to think that sixteen years acquaintance is something a tic too like relationship to feel anything like jealousy of one another.... His family are all about him; and if he too had made an appointment for himself he would have made his present one.[41]



The city which Fraser and Ochterlony returned to had changed out of all recognition from that to which they first came in 1803. Peace had brought affluence, and the city was rapidly beginning to fill up with merchants and labourers drawn into the city from all over north India who were intent on cashing in on the new boom.

39.The pictures were rediscovered by James' descendant Malcolm Fraser and auctioned at Sotheby's in London and New York in July and December 1980. The pictures from the Fraser Album have been published with a superb text by Mildred Archer and Toby Falk as *India Revealed: The Art and Adventures of James and William Fraser 1801–35*, London, Cassell, 1989. See also chapter 5 of the author's *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*, Delhi, 1993.

40 William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, London, 2002, pp. 263–4.

41 Fraser Papers, vol. 31, WF to JBF, p. 7, Tulwara, Bhutnere, 22 March 1821.

The *Gazetteer* of 1815 claimed that the value of land had doubled in the first decade since the British pacified the Delhi territory.[42] As early as 1811 Alec Fraser had begun to notice the scale of the change. 'The people have been attracted by security and prosperity to inhabit the city,' he told his mother.

> They have frequently built their houses without order, in the enclosed spaces where formerly stood some nobleman's palace, making use of the ruins to form their habitations, and of the enclosing wall to protect against thieves. In a city so formed a guess is made with much difficulty and little accuracy respecting population. Hence some compute the population of Delhi at three some at five hundred thousand....[43]

Few of these newcomers, however, were European, and for those such as Alec Fraser who did not like mixing with the nobility and intelligentsia of Mughal Delhi, the city could still be a lonely posting. 'There is little society here,' he complained in 1811, adding that after he had finished his court work he had little option but take refuge in the company of his classical library: 'I have not quite forgot old Latin—Greek long since fled—but Livy, Tacitus or Caesar still now and then employ an hour agreeably—and Virgil & Horace often peeped into. The language has got a certain fixture in my mind that want of habit itself can scarcely eradicate.'[44]

The situation in Delhi was unusual, for by the second decade of the nineteenth century cities such as Murshidabad and Lucknow were filling with Europeans in search of fortunes, while Delhi was still regarded as distant frontier territory, off the map for most foreigners in India. Well into the 1820s, only the more adventurous travellers such as Jacquemont or the spy and Central Asian explorer William Moorcroft ventured as far as the Mughal capital. For this reason, at the same time as the ruling houses of Murshidabad and Lucknow were experimenting with Western fashions and Western classical architecture, Delhi remained firmly a centre of Mughal style.

There was no question of the emperor Akbar Shah turning up in durbar dressed as a British admiral or even a vicar of the Church

42 Cited by Narayani Gupta in *Delhi Between Two Empires*, New Delhi, 1981, p. 4.

43 Fraser Papers, vol. 33, AF to his mother, p. 338, 6 December 1811, on the Ganges.

44 Ibid., p. 279, Delhi, 3 August 1811.

of England as had been heard of in Lucknow; nor was there any trace of Western architectural influence in the buildings erected by the later Mughal emperors: Zafar Mahal in Mehrauli, for example, is erected in full late Mughal style—the linear descendant of that used by Shah Jahan when he established the city in 1648, though with slight modifications: the balusters and pillars, for example, were thinner and arguably more elegant than their Shah Jahani predecessors. There was little experimentation with Western classical pediments, ornamental stucco, or square Georgian windows, all of which had become common in Lucknow. Only one Mughal prince is known to have worn Western clothes and built in a European style prior to 1857—Mirza Babur, the younger brother of Bahadur Shah Zafar, and the fact that he attracted as much comment as he did is significant.[45]

Partly this unpolluted Mughal culture was due to the sheer distance of Delhi from the centres of Western influence such as Calcutta. Partly also it was a matter of Delhi's lingering imperial self-confidence: as Peter Hardy has rightly commented, 'one is impressed by how little in feeling and in style of life the educated classes of Delhi were touched by the British presence before 1857.'[46] Even in the 1850s, young scholars coming to Delhi would turn their noses up at a Western or English language education. As Altaf Husain Hali later wrote about his time as a student in late Mughal Delhi:

> Although the old Delhi College was then in all its glory, I'd been brought up in a society that believed that learning was based only on knowledge of Arabic and Persian...nobody even thought about English education, and if people had any opinion about it at all it was as a means of getting a government job, not of acquiring any kind of knowledge. On the contrary our religious teachers called the English schools barbarous. When I arrived in Delhi...all the teachers and students considered graduates of the college nothing but barbarians.[47]

One prominent Delhi family who did send their children to the Delhi College were the great Anglo-Indian dynasty, the Skinners of Hansi. The Skinners, along with their rivals, the Gardners of

45 Percival Spear, *The Twilight of the Moghuls*, p. 65, quoting Major Archer, *Tours in Upper India*, vol. 1, p. 383.

46 Peter Hardy, *Ghalib and the British*, p. 55 in Ralph Russell (ed.), *Ghalib: The Poet and His Age*, London, 1972.

47 Quoted in Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, p. 14.

Khasgunge, as well as the Hearseys of Dehradun and the circle around the Begam Samru of Sardhana all kept houses in Delhi and formed a sort of Anglo-Mughal Islamo-Christian buffer zone between the Mughal world of the court and the nominally Western world of the Company's Residency. The Begam Samru, the Gardners and the Hearseys held their land as *jagirdar*s of the emperor, while the Skinners had originally received theirs from the Marathas and been confirmed in their holdings by Lord Lake. All three dynasties, however, nominally professed Christianity while speaking mainly Persian and Hindustani, and living in an almost entirely Muslim Mughal style. All tried with increasing difficulty to reconcile these rapidly diverging worlds.

James Skinner was the son of the Scottish mercenary Hercules Skinner, himself the son of the Provost of Montrose; his mother was a Rajputni, the daughter of a Rajput zamindar from 'the Bojepoor country'.[48] Having fought bravely for the Marathas, he eventually found himself ejected from their ranks because of his British blood; later he fought for the English, only to be increasingly discriminated against by the East India Company because of his Indian blood. 'I imagined myself to be serving a people who had no prejudice against caste or colour, he wrote in his memoirs.' But I found myself to be mistaken.' His mixed inheritance was, he concluded , 'like a two-edged blade made to cut both ways against me.'[49]

Nevertheless, living between cultures had its moments, as Ochterlony and Fraser discovered. Skinner's services for the Mughal emperors led to him being given a title his Montrose grandfather would have raised his eyebrows at: Nasiru'd-Daula Colonel James Skinner Bahadur Ghalib Jang, which the people of Delhi shortened to Sikandar Sahib, for the populace of the Mughal capital looked on him as the reincarnation of Alexander the Great.

Skinner was a Christian who took his religion very seriously, and towards the end of his life he built St James, the first church in Delhi, and became a pillar of the Delhi Anglican community. This did not, however, stop him having a large number of wives ('there are any number of beautiful Mrs Skinners,' wrote an impressed

48 Fraser, *Military Memoirs of James Skinner*, p. 105.
49 Ibid., pp. 159, 162.

Fanny Eden[50]), 14 according to one estimate,[51] and Skinner restored a beautiful Mughal mosque near his Delhi *haveli* for the Muslims among them, as well as (according to Delhi legend at any rate) building a temple for those who professed the Hindu faith. Fanny Eden described him as:

> a native colonel, very black [and] much better society than any of the white colonels we meet here, and who has done many warlike wonders. He is staying here and is a very fine old man. We went on Sunday to a large church he had built, and there is a mosque he has also built very near it. He told me that where is God, there is religion, but I suppose he calls himself a Musselman.[52]

Fanny was quite wrong to make this assumption, but as Skinner lived in an entirely Mughal style, and his English was stilted and ungrammatical,[53] the mistake was understandable. His chief wife was certainly Muslim: her name was 'Ashuri Khanum and she was a landowner in her own right, while her father, a powerful Haryana zamindar named Mirza 'Azim Beg, was Skinner's principal administrator at the barracks of Skinner's irregular cavalry regiment (popularly known as the Yellow Boys) at Hansi.[54]

Skinner's brother Robert was a more tragic figure than Sikandar Sahib: in a fit of jealousy he murdered all his wives before killing himself.[55] Prior to his death, however, Robert Skinner had been in the service of the Begam Samru and had formed a link between the two dynasties.

50 Fanny Eden, *Journals*, reprinted as *Tigers, Durbars and Kings*, p. 135.

51 Ram Babu Saksena, *European and Indo-European Poets of Urdu and Persian*, Lucknow, 1941, pp. 96–6.

52 Eden, *Tigers, Durbars and Kings*, p. 135.

53 In a letter to Lord Bentinck in the Nottingham University Library, PW JF 2047/1–2, Hansee, 12 October 35: Skinner writes as if he is thinking in Urdu and translating it as best he can into English: 'Regarding my narrative,' he writes, 'if your Lordship thinks it is worth your Lordship's trouble, I am proude to lay it at your feet; do my Lord what you like. I am only sorry that my abilities in the English language was not sufficient as to have given you a better account than what it contains. So my gracious and kind benefactor, consider me as a piece of clay in a potters hand, and you may make me what you like.'

54 Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India*, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 254–5. In a letter to Lord Bentinck in the Nottingham University Library, PW JF 2047/1–2, Hansee, 12 October 35, Skinner refers to a 'wife' in the singular who sends her best to the governor general and Lady Bentinck.

55 Eden, *Tigers, Durbars and Kings*, p. 135.

The Begam Samru of Sardhana presided over one of the most fascinatingly hybrid courts in India. The begam was originally said to have been a Kashmiri dancing girl named Zebu'n-Nisa, born 1751, whose rapid rise to fortune began when she became the *bibi* of a German soldier of fortune in Mughal service, Walter Reinhardt, known as 'Sombre' (Indianized to 'Samru') after his severe expression.

When the Mughal emperor Shah Alam gave Reinhardt a large *jagir* (estate) in the Doab, north of Delhi, Reinhardt's begam went with him and turned the village of Sardhana into their capital, with a ruling class drawn both from Mughal noblemen and a ragged bunch of over 200 ne'er-do-well French and Central European mercenaries, some of whom apparently converted to Islam and took Muslim names.[56] After Sombre's death, his begam ruled in his stead, partly from Sardhana, and partly from her large palace on Chandni Chowk. She converted to Catholicism—while continuing to cover her head in the Muslim manner—and appealed direct to the Pope to send a chaplain for her court. By the time the intriguingly named Father Julius Caesar turned up in Sardhana, her plans to build the largest cathedral in northern India were already well advanced.

The culture of the begam's circle mixed European and Mughal custom to an extraordinary extent: so much so that at least three of the begam's European mercenary officers became poets in Urdu—one, whose pen name was Farasu, turned out to be the son of a German Jewish soldier of fortune, Gottlieb Koine, by a Mughal princess; he was included in the list of prominent Urdu poets produced by the former principal of Delhi College, Aloys Sprenger, while according to another contemporary critic this unlikely poet left behind him a 'camel load of poetic works'.[57] Another was 'Jan', a son of George Thomas by one of the begam's slave girls, who is depicted in the miniatures of the period wearing the extravagant kincob dress, bare feet, and raffish haircut of a late Mughal *banka* or gallant.[58]

56 See Linda York Leach, *Mughal and other Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, vol. II, London, 1995, p. 794. Two Europeans shown in the painting 7.121 are referred to by their Muslim names Khwajah Ismail Khan and Salu Khan.

57 See John Lall, *Begam Samru: Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame*, Delhi, 1997, pp. 126–7.

58 See Leach, *Mughal and other Paintings*, vol. II, item 7.121, colour plate 109 and 110.

The three-day long Christmas festivities at Sardhana would be opened by High Mass, 'and during the following two days…a nautch and a display of fireworks' during which the Sardhana poets had an opportunity to recite their verses.[59] Dussehra, Diwali, and Holi were celebrated with equal enthusiasm; in addition to which the begam also dabbled in witchcraft. Indeed the diary of her heir, the wonderfully-named David Dyce Ochterlony Sombre, contains several references to the begam employing women to cast spells and conduct exorcisms.[60]

The way that the Christian converts at Sardhana continued doggedly to keep to their old Mughal customs was not to everyone's taste: as Fr Angelo de Caravaggio, the Capuchin who followed Julius Caesar, put it:

> My four years at Sardhana saw the construction of a church and a house. Since I was unable to bring about the abandonment of Muslim customs, and seeing no chance of improvement, I took the decision to devote myself to the education of children…seeing that despite my efforts, Christianity did not effect the customs of the Muslims, I [eventually] returned to Agra with the children.[61]

The strangeness of this hybrid world is reflected in the architecture which survives to day at the begam's capital of Sardhana. The vast cathedral built by the begam after her conversion promiscuously mixes baroque and Mughal motifs with a great classical dome rising from Mughal squinches decorated with Persian *murqana* (Islamic squinch with honeycombed decoration) motifs. Stranger still is the graveyard where the begam's European mercenaries are buried in miniature Palladian Taj Mahals covered with a crazy riot of hybrid ornament, where baroque *putti* (child

59 For Sardhana and the Begam Sombre see John Lall, *Begam Samru*, especially, pp. 126–7 for the Christmas festivities. See also: Michael Fisher, 'Becoming and Making Family in Hindustan', in Indrani Chatterjee, *Unfamiliar Relations*, New Delhi, 2004; Nicholas Shreeve, *Dark Legacy*, Arundel, 1996; Nicholas Shreeve (ed.), *From Nawab to Nabob: The Diary of David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre*, Arundel, 2000. For the Sardhana poets, see R.B. Saksena, *Indo-European Poets of Urdu and Persian*, Lucknow, 1941.

60 David Dyce Ochterlony Sombre's Diaries, edited by Nicholas Shreeve, *From Nawab to Nabob*, Arundel, 2000: see, for example, entries for Diwali (Thursday, 30 October, p. 66), Holi (Easter Sunday, 29 March 1834, p. 21), Dussehra (Thursday, 1 October 1835) Witchcraft (3 January 1835, p. 78), and Exorcism (Tuesday, 2 September 1834).

61 Nicholas Shreeve, *The Indian Heir*, Arundel, 1998, p. 7.

angel used in baroque decoration) cavort around Persian inscriptions and where latticed *jali* (lattice) screens rise to round classical arches. At the four corners at the base of the drum, where you would expect to find minarets or at least small minars, there stand instead four baroque amphorae.

The third of Delhi's Anglo-Mughal dynasties were the Gardners of Khasganj, who were courted by the Begam Samru for a marriage alliance throughout the 1820s, although the alliance was never finally contracted. The founder of the dynasty was William Linnaeus Gardner, who like Ochterlony was born into a prominent American loyalist family on the banks of the Hudson. He had fled America after the Patriot victory in the War of Independence, and finished his education in France and Holland, before sailing to India to make his fortune. There he inherited his father's peerage, married a beautiful Mughal princess of Cambay and, having fought for many years as a mercenary under a variety of Indian rulers, he eventually resumed his allegiance to the British Crown and formed his own irregular regiment, Gardner's Horse.[62]

In his last years of retirement, Gardner settled down on his wife's jagir at Khasganj near Agra. Gardener was very much a family man, and he talks proudly in his letters of his multiracial family:

Man must have a companion, and the older I get the more I am confirmed in this. An old age without something to love, and nourish and nurse you, must be cold and uncomfortable. The Begam and I, from 22 years constant contact, have smoothed off each other's asperities and roll on peaceably and contentedly. Now I hope both my boys will get me lots of grandchildren, for I find the grandpapa is the greatest favourite they have. The shouts of joy when I return after an absence of any time can be heard for a mile. My house is filled with Brats, and the very thinking of them, from blue eyes and fair hair to ebony and wool makes me quite anxious to get back again.. There's no accounting for taste but I have more relish in playing with the little brats than for the First Society in the World....[63]

Later he added:

Oh for a life of quiet retirement, and that it may come speedy and soon. New books, a garden, nobody to obey, paejamas and tranquillity...I think the prattle of 2 or 3 brats (on getting old) gives such delightful sensations as almost to make up for the loss of other enjoyments. I would rather sprawl

62 Narindar Saroop, *A Squire of Hindoostan*, New Delhi, 1983.
63 Gardner Papers, NAM, 6305–56, Letter 49, Saugor, 6 January 1821.

on the floor with half a dozen of my dingy progeny tumbling and romping over me than sit on the Governor Generals throne. It is so delightful to be surrounded by those who love you and can be made happy by a kind word or look. When once in the Nursery I am the youngest of the family.... If I had none of my own I should adopt a dozen at least. There is a book of the pleasures of old age; I wish I could see it. But from experience I think the first must be that of making the young folks happy and experiencing their love... to see the affectionate little things, when you're ill, coming into the room every minute on tip toe to see if Papa is better. With me 'tis now Dadda [i.e. grandfather], being Act 2nd.... The last born is generally the greatest favourite, and grandchildren more liked than children. Which the Hindoos, with their minds always running on money, account for by saying that the interest is more loved than the principal.[64]

Gardner seems to have converted to Islam to marry his begam, but he believed firmly that 'religion, like a Hindustanee girl, should be kept in purdah.'[65] He adopted a number of the Anglo-Indian daughters of departing British friends and brought them up in Hindustani style, but with no clear religious allegiance. As he joked to his cousin Edward Gardner, Ochterlony and Fraser's former colleague at the Delhi Residency, now posted to Kathmandu:

I now have 12 girls of European blood under 14 years of age to provide for and get married, how and to whom, God Knows. Will you have 2 or 3? [Certainly] something must be done to provide for our young blood fillies. What would people say of it was known that they are not (with the exception of my Goddaughter, Miss D'Caneiro) Christians, nor are they Pagans, still less have I had them circumcised.[66]

Marrying children brought up in such fabulously hybrid style was never going to be easy, and it was inevitably to each other that the different Anglo-Mughal dynasties looked for an alliance. In 1820, Gardner's begam tried to negotiate a marriage with the Begam Samru, and her husband's gossipy letters during the lengthy months of negotiation in Delhi are very revealing of the interplay of cultures in the mixed Delhi households of Ochterlony, Gardner, Samru, and Skinner.

On arrival in Chandni Chowk, Gardner reports that the 'canal has arrived, and the people delighted. The town is wonderfully improved, and the people look happy, clean and contented. New

64 Ibid., Letter 82, Babel, 7 July 1821.
65 Ibid., Letter 13, p. 35, undated.
66 Ibid., Letter 59, Babel Bagh, 9 March 1821.

houses are building on every spot... [But though] the canal gives great satisfaction, of all the sights of Delhi, [William] Fraser is the greatest. He wears a beard clipped to about ¾ of an inch, the very counterpart of Hudibras's [Gardner's bearer's] shoebrush.'[67]

As the weeks passed, Gardner continued to tell his cousin Edward about developments:

I believe James [Gardner's eldest son] is to be contracted at the next Ede, but can say nothing certain as I am not in the secret. Eunuchs and old women are going between daily [between the two households] and the business appears something like the National Debt and Sinking Fund, for I understand as much of one as of the other. My part is prompted and I act it as instructed. All I have had to do as yet was to tell the old Begam I had brought her a Goulam. Her answer was, 'You have brought me my eyes and liver!!' This I am told is all that it should be. The only thing I have interfered in was to place my veto on the whole Royal Family coming to the *shadee* as I cannot afford it.[68]

The Skinners were also in Delhi at the time, and seem to have joined in the marriage negotiations as well. 'At 11 O'clock I called at Skinners and found them all dressing for breakfast,' Gardner reported a little later.

The party, at any other time, would have amused me. James was, as ever, in his usual good humour—Robert a greater dandy than ever, and has more gold and silver chains around him than Baron Frank had in the Magdeburg Dungeon. Mrs Wood, whose tongue never stops—Mrs Bolero, who confines her exertions to Yes and No—Wood, who knows everything and contradicts everybody—all Skinner's children of all hues and colours.[69]

Finally, just as everything seemed to be arranged, Mrs Dyce, a Catholic courtier of the Begam's died in Delhi, and the latter did not hesitate to declare forty days mourning, in the Muslim manner: 'the Old Begam has thought proper to make a very expensive and tedious mourning,' reported an increasingly irritated Gardner, 'and has been feeding all Delhi besides beating herself Black and Blue, and expects Sir David as *hakim*... to take off her *Sogh* at the end of the 40 days.' Ochterlony duly offered his assistance at the mourning rituals, but confided to one friend 'that the old Begam so mixes Christian customs with the Hindoostanee that though

67 Ibid., Letter 16, p. 43, undated.
68 Ibid., Letter 14, Delhi, 6 June 1820.
69 Ibid., Letter 15, Delhi, 22 June 1820.

anxious to do that which would please the old lady, he simply did not know what was required.'[70]

It is some comfort to the historian of this period that the cultural milieu which produced this strange fusion was as surprising—or at least as confusing—to contemporaries, and even its participants, as it is now to us.

By the 1830s, the British had become the hyperpower in India. For the first time there was a feeling that technologically, economically, and politically, the British had nothing to learn from India and much to teach: as with the contemporary United States since the fall of the Soviet Union, it did not take long for imperial arrogance to set in.

It is significant that the first course to be offered at Delhi College in English language, literature, and science was launched about this time in 1828, and as part of an effort on the part of the college committee to begin uplifting what they saw as the 'uneducated and half-barbarous people of India'.[71] No longer were Indians seen as inheritors of a body of sublime and ancient wisdom as Sir William Jones and Warren Hastings had once believed, but instead merely 'poor benighted heathen', or even 'licentious pagans', some of whom, it was hoped, were eagerly awaiting conversion, and with it the path to civilization. If it had been customary in Delhi up until the 1820s for the British to mimic the Mughal elite. Now the reverse came to be increasingly true, as Delhiwallahs in the Mughal capital began mimicking the British. The White Mughals were beginning to give way to the Brown Sahibs.

Changes in religion played a major role in this change of attitude. Perhaps the most powerful of the new breed of hardline critics of Indian culture was one the Company's directors, Charles Grant. Grant was among the first of the new Evangelical Christians, and he brought his fundamentalist religious opinions directly to the

70 Ibid., Letter 16, p. 41.

71 Delhi Committee to the General Committee of Public instruction in J.F. Hilliker, 'Charles Edward Trevelyan as an Educational Reformer', Canadian Journal of History, 9, 1974, pp. 275–91.

East India Company boardroom. Writing that 'it is hardly possible to conceive any people more completely enchained than they [the Hindus] are by their superstitions,' he proposed to launch missions to convert a people whom he characterized 'universally and wholly corrupt...depraved as they are blind, and wretched as they are depraved.'[72] Within a few years, the missionaries—initially based at the Dutch settlement of Serampore—were beginning to change British perceptions of the Hindus for the worse.

It was at this period too that the first development of ideas of racial purity, of colour and ethnic hierarchy, and the beginnings of straightforward racialism emerged: ideas which would, of course, reach their most horrifying denouement in the middle years of the twentieth century, but whose roots can be traced to developments in European thought a century earlier, and at least partly to developments in British India.

These new racial attitudes affected all aspects of relations between the British and Indians. The White Mughals were becoming few and far between by the 1830s, and their way of life was beginning to die out. The Bengal wills show that it was at this time that the number of Indian wives or bibis (lovers) being mentioned begins to decline: from turning up in one in three wills in the 1780–5, the practice went into steep decline. Between 1805–10, bibis appear in only one in every four wills; by 1830 it is one in six; by the middle of the century they have all but disappeared.[73]

Englishmen who had taken on Indian customs began to be objects of surprise, even, on occasions, of derision. In the early years of the nineteenth century there was growing 'ridicule' of men 'who allow whiskers to grow and who wear turbans &c in imitation of the Mussulmans'. Curries were no longer acceptable dishes for parties, and pyjamas—common dress in eighteenth-century Calcutta and Madras—for the first time became something that an Englishman slept in rather than something he wore during the day. By 1813, Thomas Williamson was writing in *The European in India* how 'The hookah, or pipe...was very nearly universally retained among Europeans. Time, however, has retrenched this luxury so much, that not one in three now smokes.'

72 Cited in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The British Discovery of Hinduism*, Cambridge, 1970, p. 42.

73 Christopher Hawes, *Poor Relations: The Making of the Eurasian Community in British India, 1773–1833*, London, 1996, pp. 4–5.

Soon the hookah was to go the way of the bibi: into extinction. Delhi, which so long had failed to conform to the rest of the country, slowly began to fall into line.[74]

One man who embodied these changes was the cold and stolid new resident, Sir Charles Metcalfe. In his first spell in Delhi, initially as assistant to Ochterlony in 1806 and rising to be resident in 1811, Metcalfe had fitted in with the tone set by his boss, building himself a house in the Shalimar Gardens and fathering three sons by the Sikh bibi he had met at the court of Ranjit Singh. According to family tradition, Metcalfe married her 'by Indian rites'.[75] By the time of his return to Delhi as resident in 1826, Metcalfe had, however, jettisoned his bibi and begun to take a very different attitude to India and its Mughal rulers. 'I have renounced my former allegiance to the house of Timur,' he announced to Lord Bentinck in a letter of 1832 shortly after he had left Delhi to take up a position as Member of the Council in Calcutta.[76]

While overseeing Lord Amherst's visit to Delhi in 1827, Metcalfe had made sure that an end was made to the tradition of giving *nazrs* (which represented a public confirmation of the status of the British as liegemen of the emperor), and if he accepted that the British were indeed technically still vassals,[77] he was determined that this must not be acknowledged in public. 'We have on the whole behaved generously to the King from the first,' he wrote to Bentinck, 'and I never found him unreasonable or assuming. But if he pretends to what is implied in his professing to regard his interview with Lord Amherst [in which no *nazrs* were offered] as derogatory I think it is our best policy in future to let him sink into insignificance instead of upholding his dignity as we have done.'[78] It was a very different attitude to the 'demonstration[s] of reverence, respect and attention' that the first residents—Metcalfe

74 Williamson and D'Oyley, *The European in India*, Plate X: 'A gentleman with his Hookah-burdar, or Pipe-bearer'.

75 Thompson, *The Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe*, p. 101.

76 Bentinck Papers, Nottingham University. Charles Metcalfe to Lord W. Bentinck, PW JF 1637, Calcutta, 18 April 1832.

77 Ibid., PW JF 1607, Calcutta, 13 November: talking of giving nazrs Metcalfe remarks, 'It is what in some degree what will probably be done by the King of Dihlee & was done to Lord Amherst & there it is not amiss, because the superiority of the King is acknowledged and the nature of the acknowledgement cannot be mistaken.'

78 Ibid., PW JF 1620, Calcutta, 18 December 1831.

included—had paid to the emperor when they arrived in Delhi 30 years previously.[79]

Between 1811 and 1826, Metcalfe had wholeheartedly embraced the new Evangelical Christianity and comprehensively fallen out of love with India, which he described as 'joyless and vexatious':[80] it was not, he said, 'the Country of my choice,' but only 'the region in which my Lot has been cast'.[81] He agitated to allow missionaries greater access to the Indian population and openly made it clear that he believed 'every native of India' to be 'more or less dishonest'.[82] Among his colleagues, it was rumoured that his views were in fact more jaundiced still and that in truth 'Metcalfe hated natives' and that he kept 'as much aloof from them as possible'.[83]

The resident who followed Metcalfe, Francis Hawkins, took a similar approach; indeed he behaved so rudely to the emperor—refusing to stand in the empress' presence, turning down a gift of flowers from the heir apparent, and refusing to accept *shuqa*s [official missives] from anyone but the hands of the emperor himself—that he had to be removed from his post.[84] The brief love affair was now over. The British were now fast heading down the road towards 1857.

Delhi in the 1830s and 1840s still had a relatively small European community: as Azad later put it, 'those were the days when if a European was seen in Delhi, people considered him an extraordinary sample of God's handiwork, and pointed him out to each other: 'Look, there goes a European!'[85] A far larger British station was Meerut, 70 miles to the north, where the large cantonment possessed the only theatre in northern India: a great object of envy for the British Residency staff.

79 Majumdar, *Raja Rammohun Roy*, p. 4.

80 Thompson, *The Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe*, p. 114.

81 Ibid., p. 252.

82 For missionaries see Bentinck Papers, Nottingham University, PW JF 1697, Barrackpore, 27 December 1835: Charles Metcalfe to Lord W. Bentinck; for dishonest natives see Thompson, *Life*, p. 231.

83 Pitman to Henry Russell reprinted in *Indian Archives*, vol. viii, July–December 1954, 12:31. Cited in Peter Wood, 'Vassal State in the Shadow of Empire, Palmer's Hyderabad 1799–1867', PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1981, p. 283.

84 Spear, *The Twilight of the Moghuls*, pp. 52–3.

85 Azad (ed.), *Divan-e-Zauq*, p. 145. Cited in Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, p. 6.

There was still a fair amount of mixing between the small expatriate community and their Delhi neighbours; but crucially, and in marked contrast to the early years of the century, this contact now tended to take place on European terms: at the Delhi horse races, when the local nobility would descend of the town to take part in the Mogul Cup,[86] or in the Delhi Freemason's Lodge, which admitted Indian members.[87] There was also an Archaeological Society, which existed to study the Delhi ruins, and of which the young Sir Saiyid Ahmed Khan was the leading member, and a charitable Relief Society which had both Indian and European members.[88]

Most of all there was the Delhi College, where a relatively small number of the city's elite braved the opprobrium intermittently heaped upon them by their neighbours to study under the auspices of the Company. Though it never educated more than a fraction of Delhi's students, and was looked upon with suspicion by most of the city's *ashraf* [noble] families, the college did succeed briefly in generating a real sense of excitement about the new learning, an excitement well conveyed in C.F. Andrew's story of the young Zaka Ullah running all the way home from his classes, thrilled at the mathematical wonders he had imbibed.[89]

The anecdote which perhaps best illustrates the mutual incomprehension that was becoming an increasing characteristic of this period, tells of Mirza Ghalib's arrival at Delhi College in 1842, having been invited to apply for the new post of Persian professor. Ghalib arrived in his palanquin, but refused to enter the building until Thomason the secretary came and welcomed him, as he insisted his status dictated. After a long wait, Thomason

> came out personally and explained that a formal welcome was appropriate when he attended the Governor's durbar, but not in the present case, when he came as a candidate for employment. Ghalib replied, 'I contemplated taking a government appointment in the expectation that this would bring me greater honour than I now receive, not a reduction in those already accorded to me.' The secretary replied, 'I am bound by regulations.' 'Then I hope you will excuse me,' Ghalib said, and came away.[90]

86 Shreeve (ed.), *From Nawab to Nabob*, p. 71 and p. 75 entries for the 5, 6, and 23 December 1834.

87 See Michael Fisher's essay on Mohan Lal Kashmiri in this volume.

88 Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires*, 1981, p. 8.

89 Andrews, *Zakaullah of Delhi*.

90 Hali, *Yadgar-e-Ghalib*, pp. 28–9; cited in Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, p. 8.

Meanwhile, the old world of the White Mughals was quickly passing away. Sir David Ochterlony died in 1825, heartbroken at a humiliating rebuke from his masters in Calcutta. Towards the end of his life he had become increasingly depressed, sinking into an melancholia alternating with periods of wild excitement. He found his gout insupportable and his last years were spent as a cripple 'carried from chair to Court'.[91] He missed his daughters, who had married soldiers and were now posted away from Delhi, and to fill the empty rooms of his house at Shalimar, he and Mubarak Begam adopted a child from the Loharu family. Brought up by Mubarak Begam, the girl eventually married her cousin, a nephew of Ghalib.[92]

Continually in pain, the old man got increasingly tetchy and argumentative, squabbling with the Emperor Akbar Shah as well as with Gardner and the Begam Samru:

> Sir David is very unpopular here with all natives and all Europeans,' Gardner had written five years before his death. 'Skinner told him on taking leave on the 28th ultimo that it was a pity he (Sir D) had not died 16 years ago, for then he would not have left a dry eye in Delhi, but that now, were he to die, there would be public rejoicings, and the *dhole* would resound in every house!!! He has given his dancing girl the title of the late Kudseah Begam!!! The Kings Mother.[93]

After Ochterlony's death, Mubarak Begam inherited Mubarak Bagh, and she used part of her considerable inheritance to build a mosque and a haveli for herself at Hauz Qazi in the Old City. But her personal unpopularity, combined with her dancing girl background, meant that no Mughal gentleman would ever be seen using her structure. It is still, to this day, referred to as the 'Randi ki Masjid' or Prostitute's Mosque.

Meanwhile in Khasganj, William Linnaeus Gardner, also felt out of place in the new India of the Evangelicals and Utilitarians. After the failure of the marriage negotiations with the Begam Samru, his son James had married Mukhta Begam, a niece of the Mughal emperor Akbar Shah and sister-in-law of the nawab of Awadh. Together they fathered a noble Anglo-Indian dynasty, half of whose members were Muslim and half Christian; indeed some

91 Thompson, *The Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe*, p. 241.
92 Private family papers in the *haveli* of Mirza Mughal Beg, Old Delhi.
93 Gardner Papers, NAM, Letter 16, p. 41.

of them such as James Jahangir Shukoh Gardner seem to have been both at the same time.[94] Already a museum piece by the 1830s and the subject of occasional wide-eyed articles in the north Indian press,[95] his letters show that he was deeply depressed by British attempts to force their customs and religion on an unwilling India. He was especially irritated by the fact that the British seemed to have lost touch with Indian opinion: over and over again they gave offence 'for want of knowledge of the natives.... Injustice and Tyranny were never exceeded by any government that ever existed,' he wrote to a cousin.[96]

One person who knew Gardner intimately was the irrepressible traveller and writer, Fanny Parkes. Fanny was the wife of a mentally unstable junior official in charge of ice-making in Allahabad. She was in every sense a one-off. An enthusiast and an eccentric with a burning love of India that imprints itself on almost every page of her book, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (1850), from her first arrival in Calcutta, Fanny wrote how 'I was charmed by the climate; the weather was delicious; and I thought India most delightful.'[97] The initial intuition was reinforced the longer she stayed in South Asia. In the 24 years she lived in India, the country never ceased to surprise, intrigue and delight her, and she was never happier than when off on another journey under canvas exploring new parts of the country: 'Oh the pleasure,' she writes, 'of vagabondizing in India!'

Wilfully dismissive of the dangers of dacoits or thugs or tigers, Fanny turned her hand to learning the sitar, enquiring about the intricacies of Hindu mythology, trying opium, taking down recipes for scented tobacco, talking her way into harems, befriending

94 Saksena, *European & Indo-European Poets of Urdu & Persian*, pp. 100–37. Both the Gardners and the Skinners began to give both Mughal and European names to their children—thus Susan Gardner was known in the zanâna as Sabiha Begam. The Muslim branch of the Skinner family maintain the practice to this day and Frank Skinner, who controls the bicycle rickshaw rental trade in Meerut, has on the reverse of his business card his Mughal name, Sultan Mirza, written in Urdu script.

95 Fanny Parkes, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*, London, 1850; reprinted as *Begams, Thugs and Englishmen*, edited and introduced by William Dalrymple, New Delhi, 2002, p. 207.

96 Gardner Papers, NAM, Letter 100, Babel, 27 September 1821.

97 Parkes, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, p. 15. The introduction to this edition collects all the information that is known about Fanny.

Maratha princesses and collecting Hindu statuary, fossils, zoological specimens preserved in spirits, Indian aphorisms and Persian proverbs—all with an unstoppable, gleeful excitement.

Fanny Parkes' description of her visit to Gardner's estate, at Khasganj, in 1834, is the most fascinating section of her *Wanderings*, containing as it does a particularly detailed exposition of how an English nobleman lived in a culturally hybrid house with a Mughal *zanana*, Mughal customs and mixed European and Mughal cuisine: she notes, for example, that 'a Mussulman may marry an English gentleman, but she will not permit him to be present at the time of meals.'[98] Moreover, her account of Susan Gardner [known in the zanana as Sabiha Begam]'s strange Anglo-Mughal wedding celebrations, is a unique record of the last stages of this attractively multicultural world that was soon to vanish. Indeed Fanny was clearly a little in love with the dashing Colonel: 'He must have been, and is, very handsome; such a high caste man! How he came to marry his Begam I know not. What a romance his love must have been! I wish I had his portrait, just as he now appears, so dignified and interesting. His partiality flatters me greatly!'[99]

Even at this stage Gardner, though clearly a survivor from a previous age, was nevertheless not alone in his tastes and sympathies. At the wedding of the colonel's granddaughter, Fanny describes how the European guests, like their host, were all in Mughal dress. Later, 'two English gentlemen, who were fond of native life, and fascinated with Khasganj, requested me to mention to Colonel Gardner their wish to become of his family; I did so.'[100] It was the last gasp maybe, but the old inter-cultural hybridity was not yet completely finished.

Fanny Parkes stood in the middle of this process of change—this slow alienation of the British from the India they ruled—and was one of the last of the generation who was able to express unequivocal admiration for India—in the face of criticism from her peers. On her travels, she records how extreme Victorian religiosity was already beginning to make itself felt, and that attitudes were changing: 'Methodism is gaining ground very fast in Cawnpore,' she records. 'Young ladies sometimes profess to believe it is highly incorrect to go to balls, plays, races, or to any party where it is

98 Parkes, *Begams*, p. 197.
99 Ibid., p. 104.
100 Ibid., p. 203.

possible there may be a quadrille. A number of the officers also profess these opinions, and set themselves up as new lights.' In Calcutta she found many of her contemporaries were 'determined to be critical' of anything Indian.

The climax comes when Fanny pays a call to an old princess who was a cousin of the Gardners in the zanana of the Red Fort in Delhi, and British opposition to Fanny's sympathies finally comes out into the open. She lets slip that she is clearly regarded as suspect by the British in Delhi for mixing with (or even taking an interest in) the sad, impoverished descendants of the Great Mughals, and, clearly riled by their barbs, fires angrily back at the criticism, both of her and her Mughal hosts:

> I heard that I was much blamed for visiting the princess.... Look at the poverty, the wretched poverty of these descendants of the Emperors! In former times strings of pearls and valuable jewels were placed on the necks of departing visitors. When the Princess Hyat-ool-Nissa Begam in her fallen fortunes put the necklace of freshly gathered white jasmine flowers over my head, I bowed with as much respect as if she had been the Queen of the Universe. Others may look upon these people with contempt, I cannot. Look at what they are what they have been.
>
> One day a gentleman, speaking to me of the *extravagance* of one of the young princes, mentioned that he was always in debt, he could never live upon his allowance. The allowance of the prince was twelve rupees a month! Not more than the wages of a head servant.
>
> With respect to my visit, I felt it hard to be judged by people who were ignorant of the fact of my being the friend of the relatives of those I visited in the zenana. People who themselves had, perhaps, no curiosity respecting native life and manners, and who, even if they had the curiosity, might have been utterly unable to gratify it, unless by an introduction they were probably unable to obtain.[101]

Fraser and Skinner—whom Fanny also befriended on her visit to Delhi—felt in old age equally isolated in this rapidly changing city: 'Young and Skinner are now my only landmarks,' wrote William to his brother James in 1830. 'The old hands have disappeared; only one or two native chiefs remain. The Residency people are all new; and I feel alone in the crowd.'

Increasingly William's retirement began to loom in his thoughts, and with it the idea of leaving the world that had been his home for all his adult life:

101 Ibid., p. 313.

I shall transport everything I wish to take with me; and leave myself for the last year or two, completely naked; so that I may mount my camel, and cross to Persia; and leave India, not for an everlasting adieu, but as I would leave Delhi for Kurnal. I dread the pain of being torn up by the roots; and I know the best way to escape it is to set off home, with an intention of wandering again, if it be necessary, from feeling, or retrospect: but with a hope—that what is in Europe will be too fascinating, to let me think of India again...I am nowadays much alone, always much depressed in spirits, and incessantly pondering on Liberty—and enough to wander about Europe, at least, and return when tired and worn out, to Inverness....[102]

In the end though, William never had to experience this exile from his beloved Delhi. On the night of the 22 March 1835, Fraser was assassinated as he rode back at night from an entertainment at the house of the maharaja of Kishengarh. The assassins were working for Shams'u'd-Din, the son of one of William's best friends, Ahmed Bakhsh Khan. Fraser had insulted Shamsu'd-Din by ejecting him from his house, after the latter had seized his younger brother's share of the family property; in Delhi though there is a tradition that Fraser also added insult to injury by making advances to Shamsu'd-Din's sister which, given William's known appetites, seems quite plausible.[103]

William Linnaeus Gardner died four months later on the 29 July 1835 at Khasganj, aged 65. His begam, whose dark eyes he had first glimpsed through the chicks of a curtain in Surat 38 years earlier, could not live without him. As Fanny wrote:

my beloved friend Colonel Gardner...was buried, according to his desire, near the [domed Mughal] tomb of his son Allan. From the time of his death the poor Begam pined and sank daily; just as he said she complained not, but she took his death to heart; she died one month and two days after his decease. Native ladies have a number of titles; her death, names and titles were thus announced in the papers: 'On the 31st August, at her Residence at Khasgunge. Her Highness Furzund Azeza Azubdeh-tool Arrakeen Umdehtool Assateen Nuwab Mah Munzil ool Nissa Begam Dehlmi, relict of the late Colonel William Linnaeus Gardner. The sound of *Nakaras* and *Dumanas* [kettle drums and trumpets] have ceased.'[104]

102 Fraser Papers, vol. 31, WF to JBF, p. 105, Dehlee, 12 May 1830.

103 Serveru'l-Mulk, *My Life, Being the Autobiography of Nawab Server ul Mulk Bahadur*, translated from the Urdu by his son, Nawab Jiwan Yar Jung Bahadur, London, 1903, p. 61.

104 Parkes, *Begams*, p. 242.

James Skinner lived long enough to raise a monument to beloved Fraser outside St James', before following his friend on 4 December 1841. His passing marked the end of an age.

Bahadur Shah Zafar was the last Mughal emperor of Delhi, and one of the most talented, tolerant and likeable of his remarkable dynasty. Born in 1775, when the British were still clinging to the Indian shore, he had in his own lifetime seen his dynasty reduced to humiliating insignificance and the British transform themselves from simple traders into the most powerful military force India had ever seen.

Zafar came late to the throne, succeeding his father Akbar Shah II only in 1837 when he was in his mid-60s, and when it was already too late to reverse the inexorable political decline of the Mughals. But despite this he succeeded in creating around him a court culture of great brilliance, and partly through his patronage there took place in Delhi one of the greatest literary renaissance's in Indian history. As C.F. Andrews put it, 'the renaissance in Delhi gave a sudden illumination to the age.... Light flickered and leapt up for a brief moment before it died away.'[105]

Zafar was himself a mystic, poet and calligrapher of great charm and accomplishment, but his achievement was to nourish the talents of India's greatest Urdu poet, Ghalib, and especially those of his rival Zauq. While the British progressively took over more and more of the Emperor's power, removing his head from the coins and finally laying plans to remove the Mughals altogether from Shah Jahan's Red Fort and banish them to Zafar Mahal in Mehrauli, the court busied itself in obsessive pursuit of the most cleverly turned romantic lyric, the most moving ghazal, the most perfect Urdu couplet. As military and economic realities of British power and territorial ambition closed in, the court was lost in a last idyll of pleasure gardens, courtesans, Sufi shrines and poetic symposia. The taste for poetry filtered down to the Delhi streets: a *tazkira* (or compilation) of Urdu poets published in 1855, The Garden of Poetry contains no less than 53 from Delhi who range from the emperor and members of his family to a poor

105 Andrews, *Zakaullah of Delhi*, p. 66.

water-seller in Chandni Chowk, a merchant in Panjabi Katra, a young wrestler, a courtesan and a barber.[106]

The closest focused record of the Red Fort at this final period is the court diary kept daily by the British *akhbar navis* (news writer) between 1851 and 1854.[107] The diary contains a fabulously detailed day-by-day picture of court life. Bahadur Shah appears as a benign old man, daily having olive oil rubbed in his feet to soothe his haemorrhoids, occasionally rousing himself to visit a garden, go on a hunting expedition or host a *musha'ira* (poetic symposium). Afternoons were spent watching his elephants being bathed in the Jamuna and evenings 'enjoying the moonlight', listening to ghazal singers, or eating fresh mangoes from the Hayat Bakhsh Bagh.[108] All the while the aged emperor tried to contain the infidelities of his young concubines, one of whom becomes pregnant by the court musician Tanras Khan.[109]

Throughout Zafar comes across as both extremely religious and extremely superstitious: his principle interest appears to lie in constructing and visiting shrines, and conversing with the Sufi mystics of Delhi.[110] He collects Sufi charms and *ta'wiz* (amulet) to protect him from witchcraft and the evil eye,[111] and distributes 'flower necklaces' at 'Id. His team of court astrologers are in constant attendance.[112] On one occasion, in public durbar, he ticks off the poet Ghalib for his 'want of religion'.[113]

106 Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, p. 10.

107 National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi, Foreign, Foreign Dept Misc., vol. 361, *Precis of Palace Intelligence*.

108 Ibid. For fresh mangoes from Hayat Bakhsh Bagh, see entry for Thursday, 22 September 1853; for music see Saturday, 13 August 1853.

109 Ibid. For oil rubbing see entry for Monday, 29 March 1852; for hunting see entry for Thursday, 13 April 1852; for visiting gardens see Friday, 16 April 1852; for enjoying moonlight see entry for Saturday, 10 September; for watching bathing elephants see Tuesday, 26 July 1853; for infidelities of Bahadur Shah Zafar's (henceforth BSZ) concubines see entry for Saturday, 17 April; for other pregnancies among the imperial concubines see entry for Tuesday, 30 August.

110 Ibid. Friday, 11 November 1853 for BSZ ordering the construction of a shrine in the New Garden.

111 Ibid. For ta'wiz see entry for Thursday, 16 August 1853.

112 Ibid. For astrologer see, for example, entry for Tuesday, 23 August 1853, when BSZ gives a cow to the poor on the advice of his astrologers. For flower necklaces, see entry for Wednesday, 14 October 1853.

113 Ibid. For shrines see, for example, Tuesday, 6 April 1852; for Sufis see, for example, Saturday, 3 April 1852; for Ghalib see, Friday, 7 October 1853.

What is most striking in the diary, however, is that the British hardly figure at all: it is as if they have become almost invisible to the court. Even the British resident barely makes an appearance: for day-to-day business he instead sends his munshi. Indeed the final British resident, Simon Fraser, spent over a month in Delhi before bothering to visit the emperor and even failed to turn up to the first reception arranged for him in the Roshanara Bagh.[114] Judging by the diary, there was virtually no cultural interaction between the two worlds. By the 1850s the British only appear to the Mughal court as irritants and embarrassments, intervening occasionally to complain about something the young princes have done, to ban burials in Sufi shrines within the city walls, stopping Zafar giving away rings from the crown jewels or to limiting the right of the emperor to confer *khil'ats* (dress of honour) on visiting dignitaries.[115]

Yet by the 1850s, there were in fact more British than ever in Delhi. Not only were there many more Company officials manning the expanded Residency, which was now overseeing relations with the Rajput states as well as with the Mughal court, there was also a small community of non-Company officials settling in the Civil Lines, the new European suburb taking shape to the north of Shahjahanabad, in the lee of the Ridge. This consisted of men such as the evangelical missionary Padre Jennings who controversially baptized Master Ram Chandra and Dr Chiman Lal of Delhi College and who, to the growing horror of the 'ulama, planned to open a branch of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in the heart of Delhi.[116] There was also the sub-editor of the *Delhi Gazette*, George Wagentrieber, who had married one of Skinner's daughters; the civil surgeon Dr Ross ('short and corpulent and very ugly…a shocking bad doctor') whose three standard prescriptions were leeches, senna packed into dirty 'black beer bottles

114 Ibid. Fraser's arrival in Delhi is reported in the entry for Friday, 24 November 1853; a reception at Roshanara Bagh is planned for the 1 December, but the Agent does not turn up, although he does pay a sightseeing visit to the Red Fort in the company of some friends when BSZ is away on Thursday, 8 December. He waits for another couple of weeks before bothering to come and introduce himself on Thursday, 22 December 1853. BSZ prepares for his reception by organizing a frantic bout of springcleaning and repairs.

115 Ibid.; for the Agent ordering the return of a khil'at see entry for Thursday, 3 April 1852; for the British banning burials within the walls see entry for Tuesday, 13 September 1853; for interfering with the crown jewels see Tuesday, 13 October 1853.

116 Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, pp. 204–6, 211.

and huge pills sent in a rough wooden box';[117] and Aloys Sprenger, the principal of Delhi College, whose wife ('worthy but common,' according to Emily Bayley) used to hide her husband's trousers to prevent him going out in the evening and leaving her alone.[118] Fanny Eden believed the Delhi European community was 'undistinguished in any way, except perhaps that the female part of it are addicted to mittens of their own making, with large brassy-looking bracelets over them.'[119]

Yet, by and large, with the exception of Padre Jennings who aimed particularly at converting Delhi's 'learned classes' both Hindu and Muslim,[120] the British now kept exclusively to themselves, existing in the parallel world of the Civil Lines, attending a parallel court—that of the resident. Socially, their company was largely avoided by the Mughals and the ashraf families: Nazir Ahmad records that 'my father...told me...he would rather see me die than learn English.'[121] The British reciprocated the feeling of distaste and seem at this period to have shown a notable lack of interest in the customs and culture of the Mughal city.

It is ironic, therefore, that the most complete and remarkable pictorial record that exists of the sensuous cultural effervescence of the last days of Mughal Delhi comes from the patronage not of Zafar, nor of the Mughal Court itself, but from Zafar's nemesis, the notably unartistic and unimaginitive British resident, Sir Thomas Metcalfe, younger brother of Sir Charles.

Metcalfe was a very different man to the White Mughals who preceded him. A fastidious prude, even compared to his brother, he would have blanched at the thought of a 'native' mistress. Indeed so refined were his feelings, according to his daughter Emily Bayley, that he could not bear to see women eat cheese. Moreover he believed that if the fair sex insisted on eating oranges or mangoes, they should at least do so in the privacy of their own bathrooms.

He would never have dreamt of dressing as Ochterlony had, in full Mughal *pagri* (turban) and *jama* (clothing). Instead, he arranged that his London tailors, Pulford of St James Street, should regularly send out to Delhi a chest of sober but fashionable English

117 Emily Bayley quoted in Kaye (ed.), *The Golden Calm*, pp. 145, 161.
118 Ibid., p. 213.
119 Eden, *Tigers, Durbars and Kings*, entry for 22 February, 1838, p. 133.
120 Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, p. 206.
121 Cited by Gupta in *Delhi Between Two Empires*, 1981, p. 7.

clothes. His one concession to Indian taste was to smoke a silver hookah. This he did every day after breakfast, for exactly 30 minutes. If ever one of his servants failed to perform his appointed duty, Metcalfe would call for a pair of white kid gloves. These he would pick up from their silver salver and slowly pull on over his long white fingers. Then, 'with solemn dignity', having lectured the servant on his failing, he 'proceeded to pinch gently but firmly the ear of the culprit, and then let him go—a reprimand that was entirely efficacious.'[122]

Much of Metcalfe's professional life was dedicated to laying the groundwork for abolishing the Mughal dynasty, and for negotiating a succession settlement that would allow the Company to expel the royal family from the Red Fort on the death of Zafar. He had little respect for this man he was determined should be the last of the Timurid line. As he wrote to his daughter Emily, '[Zafar] is mild and talented, but lamentably week and vacillating and impressed with very erroneous notions of his own importance, productive of great mortification to himself and occasionally of much trouble to the local authorities.'[123]

Yet Metcalfe's attitude to Delhi was much more ambiguous than this might suggest and, almost against his better instincts, he slowly came to fall for the fabulous city he presided over. Between 1842 and 1844 Metcalfe commissioned a series of images of the monuments, ruins, palaces and shrines of the city from a Delhi artist named Mazar Ali Khan. He later had the images bound into an album, entitled 'The Dehlie Book', and wrote a long descriptive text as an accompaniment which he sent to his daughter Emily as she headed from an English schooling to join her father in Delhi.

Mazar Ali Khan was part of same great dynasty of Company School miniature artists, the patriarch of whom, Ghulam Ali Khan, had worked for William Fraser on the Fraser Album. 'The Dehlie Book' contains wonderful images of Mughal mosques and ruins, processions of carparisoned elephants and horses, *parda* carriages and courtly cavalry. The brilliance and simplicity of the colours, the meticulous, almost hypnotic attention to detail, the gem-like highlights, the way the picture seems to *glow*, all these point unmistakably towards Mazar Ali Khan's Mughal training, as does his

122 Emily Bayley quoted in Kaye (ed.), *The Golden Calm*, pp. 124–8.
123 Ibid., p. 35.

somewhat idiosyncratic approach to perspective. No English artist would have thought of using the astonishing palette of colours that still stands out like a small aesthetic firework display; the tentative washes of a memsahib's watercolour are a world away from this work.

Yet the almost fanatical Mughal attention to fine detail is fused with a scientific European rationalism to produce an architectural painting that both *observes* and *feels* the qualities of a building. Thus, while the picture of the tomb of Ghaziu'd-Din in the Delhi College complex minutely reproduces the proportions and detail of the Mughal domes of the mosque behind it, the artist has also understood the ideal of lightness and delicacy which the architect was aiming at, and produced an image of the building as fine and as fragile as a lace ruff: the tomb, you feel, is so delicate and ethereal it could almost be blown away with a breath.

But for all the life and colour and vibrant vivacity in the paintings of 'the Dehlie Book', there is a sadness inherent in its images; for it records a city on the eve of catastrophe. On a May morning in 1857, only 13 years after the albums completion, 300 mutinous sepoys rode into Delhi, sacked the Delhi College, massacred every British or Christian man, woman and child they could find—including Joseph Skinner and Padre Jennings—and declared Zafar their emperor. No friend of the British, Zafar was powerless to resist being made the leader of an uprising he knew from the start was doomed: an officerless army of peasant soldiers set against the forces of the world's greatest military power. Within a month Delhi was surrounded by the British, and the scene was set for one of the most pitiless sieges in Indian history.

During the Uprising, Gardner's Anglo-Indian descendants, like those of all the other White Mughals, were forced to make a final choice between one or other of the two sides—though for many the choice was made for them. Some families—such as the Rottens in Lucknow, and Mubarak Begam, Ochterlony's widow in Delhi—chose the rebels. After an attack on their property, the Gardners were forced to take refuge first in Aligarh, then in the Fort of Agra, and so also ended up on the side of the British—though given a free hand they might just as easily have lined up behind their Mughal cousins in Delhi and Lucknow.

Several of the Skinners were sheltered in the basement (*tahkhana*) of Nawab Ziau'd-Din Ahmad Khan, the son of Sikandar Sahib's

old friend Ahmed Bakhsh Khan.[124] Another of Sikandar Sahib's grandchildren was Miss Julia Wagentrieber. The 18-year-old had spent her entire youth trying to escape the perceived 'taint' of her mixed race—only to find that it was her dark skin and facility with Hindi that saved her on 11 May 1857. Donning her sari for the first time since her childhood, and putting a Hindu *bindi* mark on her forehead, Julia along with her mother and sister escaped up the Great Trunk Road, only to be betrayed and captured the following morning by two sepoys. Recognizing their insignia, however, as that of Skinner's Horse, Julia revealed who she was and was told by the two men that they had personally carried Skinner's coffin on their shoulders from Hansi to Delhi: 'We have eaten the Colonel's salt and we will give our life for any of his children.' They were later sheltered by an old man who had been a village headman at one of Skinner's land holdings.[125]

The Siege of Delhi was the Raj's Stalingrad: a crucial fight to the death between two forces, neither of whom could possibly afford to retreat. For the four hottest months of the Indian summer, the beautiful Mughal capital was bombarded by British artillery. There were unimaginable casualties, the city left without water, and the combatants on both sides driven to the limits of extreme physical and mental endurance. Finally, on the 14 September 1857, the British assaulted and took the city, sacking, massacring and looting as they went. Anyone who survived the subsequent genocide was driven out into the countryside. Delhi was left an empty ruin.

One of the cruellest of the British on the recapture of the city was Theophilus Metcalfe. Metcalfe was the son of Sir Thomas, who was the city magistrate at the time of the outbreak and who had managed to cut his way out of the city and escape to safety at Karnal via Hansi.[126] Known as 'One-eyed Metcalfe', due to his eye patch, he had to be removed from Delhi following the recapture as even by the barbaric standards of the time his behaviour was inexcusably blood-thirsty and cruel. According to the Commissioner, Charles Saunders, 'Metcalfe was so *maddened* with revenge

124 NAI, Foreign Dept, Foreign Consultations, 13 August 1858, nos 439–46, p. 547f, Letter of CB Saunders to Temple, 20 May 1858, p. 547f.

125 Julia Haldane, *The Story of Our Escape from Delhi*, Agra, 1888. Also the private papers of Michael Skinner at Secunder Hall, Barlow Gang, Mussoorrie.

126 'The Delhi Book', now in OIOC. Add Or 5475 contains a mss letter from T.T. Metcalfe detailing his escape from Delhi.

against the Mahometans, that he seemed to have a personal animus fomented by the sight of what he had suffered, and the defection of those whom he had trusted and befriended...his *fervor* [sic] is opposed to the just deliberation required in a Special Commissioner and the sooner the direct power of life and death is taken from him the better for the interests both of the people and of our administration.'[127] Metcalfe was duly transferred, the last of three Metcalfes to oversee the slow destruction of the House of Timur.

In the weeks that followed, the vengeful British oversaw the wholesale destruction of great areas of Mughal Delhi. The Red Fort was plundered and much of it, including the exquisite harem courts, were razed to the ground—though this was not enough for the *Lahore Chronicle* which wanted the entire city bulldozed as retribution for the sufferings of the British women and children murdered at the outbreak.[128] Though the royal family had surrendered peacefully, three of the emperor's surviving sons were shot in cold blood. Those who were spared were left in humiliating and conspicuous poverty. As Ghalib lamented, 'The male descendants of the deposed King—such as survived the sword—draw allowances of five rupees a month. The female descendants if old are bawds, and if young, prostitutes.'[129]

The emperor himself was put on show trial in the ruins of his old palace, and sentenced to transportation. He left his beloved Delhi on a peasants' bullock cart, and with him collapsed the poetic court culture he had faithfully nourished and exemplified. As Ghalib noted: 'All these things lasted so long as the king reigned.'[130]

Separated from everyone and everything he loved, senile and half-crazed with sorrow and regret, the last of the Great Mughals died in exile in Rangoon, aged 87. At 4 pm on a dark, wet winter's evening in November 1862, a wooden bier was escorted by a small group of British soldiers to an anonymous grave at the back of a walled prison enclosure, somewhere on the outskirts of Rangoon. The British authorities had made sure not only that the grave was already dug, but that large quantities of lime were on hand to guarantee the rapid decay of both wood and body. When the

127 OIOC, Saunders Correspondence, Mss Eur E 185, No. 24, Agra, 12 December 1857 to J. Lawrence. For 'One eyed Metcalfe' see Server ul-Mulk, *My Life, Being the Autobiography of Nawab Server ul Mulk Bahadur*, p. 20.

128 Cited in Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, New Delhi, 2001, p. 38.

129 Cited in Russell and Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters*, p. 269.

130 Cited in Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, p. 29.

briefest of funeral prayers had been recited, the earth was thrown in, and the turf replaced so that within a month or two no mark would remain to indicate the place of burial.

A week later the British Commissioner in charge of the funeral, Captain H.N. Davis, wrote to London to report what had passed, adding: 'Have since visited the remaining State Prisoners—the very scum of the reduced Asiatic harem; found all correct. None of the family appear much affected by the death of the bed-ridden old man. His death was evidently due to pure decrepitude and paralysis in the region of the throat. He expired at 5 O'clock on the morning of the funeral. The death of the ex-King may be said to have had no effect on the Mahomedan part of the populace of Rangoon, except perhaps for a few fanatics who watch and pray for the final triumph of Islam. A bamboo fence surrounds the grave for some considerable distance, and by the time the fence is worn out the grass will again have properly covered the spot, and no vestige will remain to distinguish where the last of the Great Moghuls rests.'[131]

It was a tragic end for a period which had begun which so much optimism and surprisingly fruitful coexistence. Perhaps the best epitaph was written by Zafar himself:

Delhi was once a paradise,
Where Love held sway and reigned;
But its charm lies ravished now
And only ruins remain.

No tears were shed when shroudless they
Were laid in common graves;
No prayers were read for the noble dead,
Unmarked remain their graves

Yet it was not enough to die
And lose one's precious head;
The people live in terror still,
And walk about in dread.

But things cannot remain, O Zafar,
Thus for who can tell?
Through God's great mercy and the Prophet
All may yet be well.[132]

131 S.M. Burke and Salim al-Din Quraishi, *Bahadur Shah: The Last Moghul Emperor of India*, Lahore 1995, pp. 204–5.

132 Zafar, as translated by Ahmed 'Ali in *The Golden Tradition*, New York, 1973. p. 211.

Section 2
Patrons and Teachers

3

Dr Aloys Sprenger and the Delhi College

M. Ikram Chaghatai

I

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the political and administrative supremacy of the British in northern India was established and almost all strings of power came in the hands of the resident.[1] Immediately, many steps were taken to improve the overall functioning of the government, but the process for the betterment of the existing educational system was rather slow, even if the British Parliament in 1813 permitted the Company to patronize Indian education. It seems that the government was somewhat reluctant to establish any educational institution under the name of 'British School' or 'British College'. Therefore, it was ultimately decided to revive some of the old centres of Islamic learning, situated in Delhi, Agra, and other places.[2]

On 12 September 1823, the secretary of the General Committee of Public Instruction (Calcutta), Horace Hayman Wilson (1786–

1 Michael H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764–1857*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991.

2 From John H. Taylor, Secretary to the Local Agency, to H.H. Wilson, Secretary and Junior Member of the Committee of Public Instruction, Fort William, dated Delhi Local Agency Office, 17.1.1824, in *Board's Collections*, 25694–25696 (1826–27), vol. 909, no. F/4/909, document no. 25694, para. 26, Oriental India Office Collection (OIOC), London.

1860), issued a printed circular, calling for information on the state of education in the big cities of northern India. The secretary to the Local Agency of Delhi, John Henry Taylor, in his reply, dated 17 January 1824, spoke briefly about a variety of topics and appended an informative list of private madrasas in the city. According to this report, the madrasa Nawab Ghaziu'd-Din Khan (founded in 1792), later named as Delhi College, had only nine students and one teacher, Maulawi 'Abd Ullah, whose monthly salary of 33 rupees was paid by Nawab Amir Khan.[3]

Next year in 1825, the madrasa restarted under its new name, the Delhi College, and J.H. Taylor, its secretary and superintendent, with a staff of three senior Muslim teachers, began teaching Islamic sciences to 49 stipendiary students.

The history of the Delhi College (1825–57) shows that it played a vital role in the educational, social and cultural life of the people in pre-Mutiny India.[4] It was the first institution where juxtaposition between Muslim and Western learning took place. The acrimonious debates between Orientalists and Anglicists culminated in the establishment of this college and the local people got an opportunity to be educated simultaneously in their traditional Islamic and modern Western learning.[5]

Many renowned scholars—local as well as British—of the subcontinent and its history, especially of the later Mughal period, have carried out painstaking research on this college and its activities. They have already thrown new light on its services in the fields of education and allied matters. Nevertheless, some aspects deserve special attention. They are very briefly stated here:

(i) From the very beginning, the Delhi College was dominated by its teachers, especially in the Oriental department, who were staunch followers of Shah Wali Ullah's (1703–62) school of

3 J.H. Taylor's list of Delhi madrasas. Dated 8 January 1824, in *Board's Collections*, op. cit.

4 J. Kerr, *A Review of Public Instruction in the Bengal Presidency, from 1835 to 1851*, part II, London, 1853, 'Delhi College', ch. IX, pp. 198–206; Maulawi 'Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, 2nd edn, Delhi, Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, 1945; Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi (ed.), *Dihli College Urdu Magazine, Qadim Dihli College Number*, Delhi, Delhi College, 1953.

5 Lynn Zastoupil, Martin Muir (eds), *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy 1781–1843*, Richmond, Curzon, 1999.

religious thought. J.H. Taylor, in his afore-mentioned report (para 26) of January 1824, recommended the name of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz (1746–1824), the eldest son of Shah Wali Ullah and a noted theologian, for the post of head teacher. Unfortunately, the recommendation could not be carried out because of the sad demise of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz in the same year. Consequently, his most distinguished pupil, Maulawi Rashidu'd-Din Khan Dehlawi (d. 1833) was appointed in his place. His name, too, was proposed by Taylor with the comment that 'The appearance of such a man would not only dissipate all that alarm, which the very name of an English School would undoubtedly create, but would conciliate all ranks of the inhabitants of the new institution.'[6] His son, Sadidu'd-Din Khan, was also appointed to the college,[7] first, as the third Arabic teacher in 1830, later being promoted to the post of Arabic teacher in 1845. A close relative of Rashidu'd-Din, Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda (d. 1868), *sudru's-sudur* of Delhi, though formally not on the teaching staff, had an assertive role in the educational affairs of the Oriental department.[8] Maulawi Mamluk 'Ali Nanautawi (d. 1851) had already joined the college in 1825 as the first Arabic teacher. He, too, was closely associated with the religious movement of Shah Wali Ullah.[9]

(ii) It is worth mentioning that of all the three principals of the Delhi College, from its inception to 1857, none was of British extraction and had no experience of educational matters. As contemporary records show, J.H. Taylor was born in India of a native woman. Therefore, he called himself an 'East Indian'. He served as an officer in the Maratha army but was pensioned off. He was then employed as the assistant collector of land revenue (Delhi division) and, on promotion, as deputy collector of the Delhi

6 J.H. Taylor's letter to H.H. Wilson, 17.1.1824, in *Board's Collections*, op. cit., para. 26.

7 *General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of Bengal Presidency for 1844–45*, Agra, 1846, 'Delhi College, Establishment as on the 30 April 1845.'

8 Maulawi Karimu'd-Din Panipati, *Farai'idu'd-Dahr*, Delhi, 1847; Saiyid Ahmad Khan, *Asaru's-Sanadid*, edited by Khaliq Anjum, Delhi, Urdu Academy, vol. 2, 1990, pp. 60–79, 267–8 (for other sources).

9 *Asaru's-Sanadid*, vol. 2, pp. 115, 277 (for other sources); Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire de la Littérature Hindouie et Hindoustanie*. Reprinted: New York, Burt Franklin, vol. 2, 1968, Paris, 1870, pp. 271–2; Maulana 'Ubaid Ullah Sindhi, *Shah Wali Ullah aur unki siyasi tahrik*, 1942, pp. 181–2.

district. He had long been engaged in the settlement of lands in the Delhi district and investigation of the rent-free tenure. He had, therefore, extensive knowledge of the localities and communities of Delhi and was fully conversant with the revenue system. In 1842, he was an unconvenanted assistant in the commissioner's office, Delhi. Strangely enough, he had held all these posts when he was the superintendent of the college and then the head master of its English department.[10]

Felix Boutros (d. 1864), the first principal of the Delhi College, was a Frenchman. He had come to India in 1824 when he was quite young. In official records his name first appears in the 1830s as an indigo planter in Gurdwarah factory in Purnea, 263 miles north of Calcutta.[11] Later he got himself employed in the opium department of Bengal. His immediate boss was a very influential person who later on, as a member of the Court of Directors, assisted him in his case against Aloys Sprenger. In 1840, he was appointed as the deputy collector and then officiating assistant in the Thuggee department in Bihar.[12] Then, strangely, on 10 February 1841, he was appointed as the first principal of the Delhi College, 'for his intimate knowledge of European Literature and Sciences, together with a competent knowledge of the Oriental Languages.' He published two books—*Principles of Legislation*[13] and *Principles of Public Revenue*[14]—during his principalship.

The second principal was Aloys Sprenger. He was an Austrian by birth and like his intimate friend and promoter, H.H. Wilson, had come to India as an assistant surgeon in the military service of Bengal. His brief life sketch and the details of his period of principalship will be given later.

In connection with the Delhi College, another name that can be mentioned is that of the famous orientalist and ethnologist Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner. He became indirectly involved with the college in 1877. He was a German-speaking Hungarian Jew and died in

10 *Board's Collections*, 1842–3, vol. 1942. Document no. 87.231, F/4/1982, OIOC; Ibid., 1844–5, vol. 2093, document no. 97.553, F/4/2093, OIOC.

11 *The East-India Register and Directory for 1835; containing complete list of the Company's Servants*. Compiled by F. Clark, London, 1835, p. 159.

12 *Bengal Civil Servants*, 1840, vol. 23, OIOC, L/F/10/23.

13 F. Boutros (Compiler), *Principles of Legislation from Bentham and Dumont*, Serampore Press, 1842.

14 F. Boutros, *Principles of Public Revenue with a Short Abstract of the Revenue Laws in the Bengal Presidency*, Serampore Press, 1844, pp. VI + 166 + 6.

Bonn in 1899. He had an eventful career in India. Among other things, he founded the Panjab University and Oriental College in Lahore and was the first principal of the Government College in the same city.[15]

(iii) In 1829, the prime minister of the king of Awadh, E'timadu'd-Daula Nawab Fazl 'Ali Khan (d. 1831), donated a handsome sum of Rs 170,000 as an endowment to the Delhi College. After his death, his son-in-law, Nawab Hamid 'Ali Khan, protested strongly against the use of the interest yielded by this amount on such things which the donor had not approved. As he claimed, Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula had been of Shia persuasion and had wanted the money to be used solely or largely for Shias in Delhi. The government disagreed with him because it believed that the dispensation of money in this way might create sectarian controversies in the college that would retard its growth.[16] In spite of the official and public opposition, in 1841, during the administrative reshuffling of the college, a post for the first Shia teacher was created and Qari Ja'far 'Ali,[17] a Shia scholar of respectable attainments and a nominee of Hamid 'Ali Khan, was appointed on 1 April 1841. In the same year, two separate classes were started for Shia and Sunni students. This was the first instance of its kind. Later on this practice was revived in the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, where in 1876, the son of the Shia teacher of the Delhi College, Qari 'Abbas Husain (d. 1926), was appointed as the professor of Shia theology in the relevant department.[18] After more than a century, the same pattern was adopted by the Pakistani government in 1975, when the Curriculum Wing of the Federal Ministry of Education introduced separate textbooks for Sunni and Shia students of high schools.[19]

15 *The Ravi* (Special Issue), Government College, Lahore. 125th Anniversary Year, vol. lxxvii, Lahore, Maktaba Jadid Press, December 1989, pp. 145–60; M. Ikram Chaghatai (ed.), *Writings of Dr Leitner*, Lahore, Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2002, 'preface'.

16 *Board's Collections* (1856–57), vol. 2073, F/4/2073. Letter to F. Taylor to Director Public Instruction, dated 13 August 1855, para. 9.

17 *General Report of the late General Committee of Public Instruction for 1840–1841 and 1841–42*. Calcutta 1842, p. 319; S.A.A. Rizvi: *A Socio-intellectual History of the Isna' Ashari Shi'is in India*, vol. II, New Delhi, Canberra, 1986, index.

18 Saiyid Raza 'Ali, *A'mal Nama* (An Autobiography), reprinted Patna, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1992 (1943), p. 137.

19 Letter, dated 14 February 1975, no. F.5–11/74.

(iv) From the late eighteenth century onwards some educational institutions were established for natives in Calcutta, Hugli, Benaras and some other places. All these madrasas and colleges played a vital role in educating the two major Indian communities, namely Muslims and Hindus, in their traditional setup, but separately. In this context, the Delhi College was the first institution where all were welcomed, irrespective of their religious persuasions and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Thus, a secular environment was created, at least within its walls. During the principalship of Aloys Sprenger (1845–7), the Delhi College was shifted to the Residency building,[20] once Dara Shukoh's private library, and this setting proved more conducive to a friendly intercommunity relationship.

II

Sprenger, when he was still a young student of Oriental studies in Vienna, had firmly decided to have a 'goal of life' and later on persistently endeavoured to accomplish it, as stated in the preface of his *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*:

Ihm kam es vor, daß man auf die Kenntnis des klassischen Althertums zu viel und auf die des Orients zu wenig Werth lege, und er hat sich daher schon in früher Jugend entschlossen, sich ganz asiatischen Studien zu widmen. Er machte es sich zum Lebensplan, das Morgenland zu besuchen, zur Erführung europäischer Kultur beizutragen und hinwieder eine richtigere Kenntnis des Orients und seiner Literatur nach Europa zurückzubringen.[21]

III

It would not be out of place to present here a brief sketch of Sprenger's life based on the Proceedings of the Bengal Education

20 *Board's Collections* (1844–45), vol. 2090, document 97.292, F/4/290; *India and Bengal Despatches* (4.10.1848–29.12.1848), vol. 59, E/4/798, OIOC.

21 Vol. 1, Berlin, 1861, Preface, p. v, 'It appeared to him that the knowledge of the classical antiquities has been given too much importance, and too little attention was paid to the Orient. So, in his youth he decided to devote himself wholly to Asian studies. I made it my goal in life to visit the East, to contribute to the introduction of the European culture and in turn to bring back to Europe a correct knowledge of the East and its literature.'

Consultations (1844)[22] and the Bengal Military Records of medical personnel, preserved in the Oriental and India Office Collection (London).[23]

Aloys Sprenger was born on 3 September 1813 in Nassereith, a small village near Innsbruck in Tyrol. He was the ninth of 10 children of Christopher Sprenger, an ex-collector of customs. He was initially taught by his two elder brothers, Johannes Petrus and Peter Paul, who were Catholic priests in Brixon. Then he joined a gymnasium in Innsbruck and after graduating from there attended four courses of lectures (each of five months duration) at Vienna University. He passed the examinations in mathematics, algebra, geometry, natural philosophy, including chemistry and astronomy, universal history, natural history, logic, and moral philosophy. Encouraged by Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856) and Vincenz von Rosenzweig-Schwannau (1791–1865) he devoted himself to Oriental studies and acquired a critical knowledge of the Oriental languages and literatures. He obtained a certificate of proficiency in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish from the Oriental Academy (Vienna) in only six months. Then he went to Paris and studied Arabic under Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) and Etienne Quatremère (1782–1852). He was a restless soul and could not stay at one place. Hence he migrated. During his stay in England he helped the Earl of Munster (1794–1842), the eldest illegitimate son of King William IV and president of the Royal Asiatic Society,[24] in his mammoth but incomplete project of a history of the Mongol invasions of India which was later transformed into a history of the Muslim art of warfare. In pursuit of an independent job, he returned to Germany and undertook the study of medicine. He was awarded the degree of MD by Leiden University for his dissertation in Latin on the origin of medicine under the Caliphate. During his stay in Germany he married Catharina Müller in Frankfurt and then came back to England. He was selected for the post of assistant surgeon in the military service of the East India

22 *Proceedings, Bengal Education Consultations* (9.1.1844–15.4.1844), document no. 139, P/15/31, OIOC.

23 *Bengal Service Army Lists—Medical*, c. 1765–1858, vol. 2, L/MIL/10/74; L/MIL/9/389, no. 496, OIOC.

24 G.E.C. Res, *The Complete Peerage, or a History of the House of Lords and all its Members from the Earliest Times* (much enlarged). Edited by H.A. Doubleday and Lord Howard de Walden, vol. IX, London, 1936, pp. 429–30.

Company and arrived at Fort William (Calcutta) on 2 September 1843. He was made the medical in-charge[25] of the 21st North Infantry on a temporary basis on 12 December 1844. After some time his services were placed at the disposal of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, so that he might be appointed principal of the Delhi College. He took charge of his new job on 6 March 1845. On 6 December 1847, he was posted as temporary extra-assistant to the resident at Lucknow for the purpose of preparing a catalogue of the royal libraries of Awadh. On 21 June 1850, he was appointed principal of the Calcutta madrasa and ex-officio visitor and director of the Hugli madrasa. On 20 September 1850 he was made Persian Translator under the Government of India, and Examiner of Candidates for the post of law officer and ex-officio Examiner of the Fort William College. He travelled extensively in various Middle Eastern countries for two years returning on 5 March 1856. Instead of joining a new job, he applied for three years' leave and on 10 September 1856 left for Europe. He returned to Germany and settled in Weinheim near Heidelberg. After the expiry of his leave he accepted the honorary professorship of Arabic and 'Hindustani' (which means Urdu) languages at Bern University in 1859. He retired in 1881 and returned to Heidelberg where he died on 19 December 1893, and cremated on 22 December.[26]

IV

The debate as to what should be the medium of instruction in the educational institutions which were being set up under the

25 Lt. Colonel D.G. Crawford, *A History of the Indian Medical Service, 1600–1913*, London, 1914, vol. 1, p. 504, vol. 2, p. 159.

26 See for detail: Dr August Haffner, *Aloys Sprenger: Ein Tiroler Orientalist. Zur Enthüllung des Sprenger-Denkmals in Nassereith am 19. Oktober 1913*, Innsbruck, 1913; Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa*, Leipzig, 1955, pp. 176–81; Annemarie Schimmel, *German Contributions to the Study of Pakistani Linguistics*, Hamburg, 1981, pp. 48–74; Norbert Mantl, *Aloys Sprenger: Der Orientalist und Islamhistoriker aus Nassereith in Tirol. Zum 100. Todestag am 19. Dezember 1993*. Im Selbstverlag der Gemeinde Nassereith, 87 pp; Stephan Procházka, 'Die Bedeutung der Werke Aloys Sprengers für die Arabistik und Islamkunde', in *Tiroler Heimatblätter*, Innsbruck, vol. 69, no. 2, 1994, pp. 38–42; for Sprenger's cremation see Letter of Thomas Schaller (Mayor, Heidelberg) to Fallbesoner (Mayor, Nassereith), dated 24 May 1993.

supervision of the British government in India was raging even before Sprenger arrived in India. The debate dragged on and the people for and against were divided into two distinct groups. Those who insisted on making English the medium of instruction were labelled 'Anglicists', while those in favour of local languages were called 'Orientalists'. Ultimately, the Educational Report of Lord Macaulay (1835) favoured the Anglicists. Preferred by the majority and backed by the government, English was included as an independent subject in schools, while the medium of instruction for other subjects remained the same, that is the vernacular. However, it was decided that these languages should be remoulded to suit the requirements of modern times and gradually Western sciences be translated into them. It was hoped that these measures would enable the people of India to gain access to the real source of manifold Western advancement. The inclusion of these clauses in the Educational Policy was in fact the result of the Orientalists' endeavours.

Sprenger belonged to the group that favoured the use of local languages as the medium of instruction. Soon after his arrival in India he began to support the Orientalists openly. A year after his arrival in India he contributed a detailed article entitled 'Three Opinions on the Education of the Natives of India' to an English weekly, *The Friend of India*.[27] The first opinion was that the people of India should be imparted education in their mother tongues. In this way learning would come naturally to them. Their latent capabilities would develop and they would progress as a nation. Secondly, all possible means should be adopted to enlarge the scope of local languages and to remove their shortcomings so that they could become true vehicles of their culture and civilization. Thirdly, a deep linguistic study of those languages, living or dead, should be undertaken from which the local languages in vogue have borrowed their vocabulary. To elucidate his views, Sprenger quoted several examples from the history of progress which rested on these three principles.

These main principles reflect Sprenger's views on education. They also incorporate the suggestions he offered for the advancement of Urdu language and literature. Through them he has

27 (Weekly, Serampore), nos 483, 484, vol. x (4 and 11 April 1844), pp. 216–17, 232–3, under 'Original Correspondence'.

outlined the measures he thought necessary for changes in the educational sphere and which he actually enforced when he headed various madrasas. The British officers in India certainly wanted to introduce Western sciences, especially the amazing scientific inventions and the resultant achievements to the people of India but the lack of suitable literature in Urdu and other local languages was a major hindrance in this enterprise. The School Book Society (founded in 1817) published many useful books in the local languages including Urdu, but they were mostly of elementary nature and could not fulfill the textual requirements of students at different levels. In 1835, the government formed an Educational Committee whose job was to provide Urdu translations of such books which could get a wide circle of readership outside academic institutions, but the committee's efforts in this respect remained largely fruitless.

In 1839, Urdu replaced Persian officially in the judicial courts and at the end of the same year, James Thomason, the then secretary of the government of the North-Western Provinces, was deputed by the government to improve the functioning of the Delhi College. He made drastic changes in the administrative and academic setup of the college and took keen interest in launching a scheme for translating scientific and historical English books into Urdu.[28] The newly appointed principal of the college, Felix Boutros, plunged himself into this project enthusiastically and employed 20 competent scholars to translate important Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, and English books relating to physics, economics, history, philosophy, and law, as he mentioned in his letter of 19 December 1841 published in *Journal Asiatique* (1842). He proposed that 80 or 90 books should be translated within three or four years by all the madrasas of the North-Western Provinces. He promised that 15 or 20 books would be published by the Delhi College.[29]

28 Mr Thomason's Minute on Agra and Delhi Oriental Colleges, in J. Kerr, op. cit., Appendix V.

29 III Sér.; Tome XIII, 1842, pp. 207–8. See also *General Report of the General Committee of Public Instruction for 1840–1841 and 1841–1842*, Calcutta 1842, 'Minute by F. Boutros, Delhi College, 1 July 1842', Appendix no. xv, pp. cxiv–cxxxii; F. Boutros, *An Inquiry into the System of Education Most Likely to be Generally Popular and Beneficial in Behar and Upper Provinces*, Serampore Press, 1842; *The Friend of India* (Serampore), no. 386, vol. viii (26 May 1842), pp. 324–5, Editorial: 'Mr Boutros on Vernacular Education'.

In 1843, a new society—called Society for the Promotion of Knowledge of India through the Medium of Vernacular Languages commonly known as Delhi Vernacular Translation Society—was formed to accelerate the pace of translation work. Its main objectives were similar to those of the Educational Committee, but in its programme priority was given to the translation of important books in English, Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian into Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali; but thanks to the widespread popularity of Urdu among the masses of northern India, most of the translations were made only in Urdu. Probably the work of translation into other languages was abandoned due to lack of resources.[30] Established as an autonomous body subsequently, the society became an adjunct of the Delhi College and its principal was made the secretary. The main reason for this affiliation was that the objectives which led to the formation of this Society were already being fulfilled by the College. The English Department's goal was to give 'to the students of the Madrasa an idea of the value of the knowledge contained in the English language, induce some to turn their thoughts to it from the comparatively unprofitable study of Arabic, Persian or Sanskrit, and impress them with better feelings towards us than their exclusively Oriental education is calculated to do.' Both the Oriental and the English departments of the Delhi College adopted Urdu as the medium of instruction for all scientific subjects.

In 1845, Sprenger was appointed the principal. He also held the charge of secretary of the society. He was very pleased to get this job, as he describes in one of his German letters written to Hammer-Purgstall on 20 July 1845, still available in his ancestral home at Schloss Hainfeld (near Graz).[31] Soon he took numerous steps not only to improve the administration and teaching of college but also accelerate the translation work of the society. For him it was a golden opportunity to implement the suggestions he had made in his above mentioned article of 1844. He made full use of it and with the help of local scholars and learned staff members of the college translated several books into Urdu.

It will be rather interesting to mention here that Sprenger tried to run the Vernacular Translation Society on the pattern of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (London) which

30 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, pp. 119–45; *Dihli College Urdu Magazine*, op. cit., pp. 133–8 (article by Prem Pal Ashk).

31 These letters are still unpublished.

was founded in 1826, largely at the initiative of Henry Brougham (1778–1868), and whose object was 'the imparting of useful information to all classes of the community, particularly to such as are unable to avail themselves of experienced teachers, or may prefer learning by themselves.' The voluminous doctoral dissertation of Monica C. Grobel on this London-based society in 1932 (available in the University of London, Senate House and Library) reveals many similarities with the general policy and functions of the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society. Moreover, Sprenger's hitherto unknown 12 letters of the period of 1842 and 1843 (still preserved in the University College London library) provide new information about his close connections with this society as a member and regular contributor to its scholarly projects.[32]

As secretary of the Vernacular Translation Society, Sprenger used to submit a detailed semi-annual report to the directors about its progress within the specified period. At present, two such reports are extant and these were printed at the Delhi Gazette Press by Kanhayya Lal in 1846. The first report was presented on 23 July 1845. It incorporates an inventory of acquired as well as translated books, mentioned mostly by their titles (without giving the names of their authors), progress regarding the translation work, and suggestions as to how the text could be made practicable for teaching purposes. The second report is undated. It contains general thoughts about book prices, punctuation, translators, printing office, etc. and lists the books on natural history, medicine, grammars, and dictionaries in preparation. It even mentions a large number of letters received from various quarters. It finally gives a financial statement for the second half of 1845 and an inventory of textbooks.[33]

With the active support of local scholars and learned staff members of the college, Sprenger managed to translate several

32 These letters are mostly concerned with the Society's *Biographical Dictionary* which never progressed beyond the volume for names beginning with A. (See, *The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, 1826–48: A Handlist of the Society's Correspondence and Papers*, compiled by Janet Percival. The Library University College, London 1978, p. 10). The first four volumes of this *Dictionary* were published in London (1842–4) under the editorship of George Long (two copies are available in the British Library, London).

33 *Early Indian Imprints* by Katharine Smith Diehl, assisted in the Oriental Languages by Hemendra Kumar Sicar, New York/London, The Scarecron Press, 1964, p. 329.

books into Urdu within a short period of three years of his principalship. The speed, efficiency, and devotion with which Sprenger did this work can be judged from the list of publications prepared by him which appeared in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1845.[34] This list includes all the books of the society that had been published upto that year, were in press or had been approved for translation. He also introduced, in 1849 and 1850, these publications in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* under the heading 'Litteraturbericht aus Ostindien'.[35]

Though like many other institutions devoted to intellectual and literary activities, this short-lived society, too, fell victim to the catastrophe of 1857 and ceased to exist along with the Delhi College, the valuable principle of diffusing Western learning among the populace was not abandoned. A few years later, in 1862, Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan (1817–98) founded his Scientific Society in Ghazipur.[36] Its main object was to translate scientific and scholarly English books into Urdu so that Muslims as well as Hindus could be acquainted with Western literature and sciences. It also intended to create an atmosphere of friendship and amity among the rulers and the ruled. Some of Sir Saiyid's Urdu works indicate that his whole scheme was inspired by the Vernacular Translation Society of the Delhi College.

The tradition of translating scientific terms and works from English into Urdu, however, did not die with the Scientific Society of Sir Saiyid. It is still being followed by numerous organizations of both India and Pakistan. Daru'l Tarjuma (Osmania University, Haidarabad), Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu (New Delhi and Karachi), Taraqqi-e Urdu Bureau (New Delhi), Idara-e Tasnif o Talif o Tarjuma (Karachi), Idara-e Tasnif o Tarjuma (Lahore), Urdu Science Board (Lahore), Majlis-e Zaban-e Daftari (Lahore), and National Language Authority (Islamabad) are a few examples of such organizations. The Scientific Society also made a pioneering effort to standardize scientific terms in Urdu. Though it did not succeed completely, it was still a trailblazer. Others are following it and trying to remove discrepancies in Urdu translations.

34 Vol. xiv, part II (July–December, 1845), *Proceedings* (August 1845), pp. lxxv–lxxix.

35 Vol. 3, 1849, pp. 344–7; vol. 4, 1850, pp. 116–17.

36 Altaf Husain Hali, *Hayat-e Jawid*, Cawnpur, Nami Press, 1901, pp. 119–21.

V

The origin of Urdu journalism remained a controversial topic among the literary historians of Urdu language for many years. However, the latest researches have almost conclusively proved that the first Urdu newspaper came out on 27 March 1822 as an appendix of a Persian newspaper named *Jam-e Jahan Numa* from Calcutta.[37] During the 1830s two independent Urdu weekly journals appeared from Delhi. One was *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*.[38] It was edited by Muhammad Baqir, the father of Muhammad Husain Azad. The other was *Saiyidu'l-Akhbar*. Its editor was Saiyid Muhammad, the elder brother of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan.[39] Urdu journalism of this early period mainly purported to be informative and most of the newspaper was devoted to political events occurring in India and abroad. Polemical debates and writings were displayed prominently. Sometimes the literary activities of Delhi's citizens were also mentioned.

It was the Delhi College where not only pioneering but also innovative attempts were made to use journalism for educational purposes so that the mental outlook and intellectual horizon of the local people could be expanded. In 1843 the college authorities decided to start an Urdu weekly periodical, entitled *Talib-e 'ilmon ka akhbar*,[40] which was to contain political news, translations of good editorials, articles or parts of articles from Anglo-Indian papers or from English periodicals. As explained in the *General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1843–44*, 'this periodical would convey a great deal of useful information, would, in some measure, be a check on, and a model for common native newspapers and finally it would in some degree be for the local public a substitute for the English periodicals.'

But owing to unknown reasons, this journal could not see the light of day. However, after two years, Aloys Sprenger on his own initiative started publishing a weekly journal entitled, symbolically,

37 Gurbachan Chandan, *Jam-e Jahan Numa*, Delhi, Maktaba Jamia, 1992.

38 Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi (ed.), *Dihli Urdu Akhbar*, Delhi, Delhi University Urdu Department, 1972.

39 Imdad Sabri, *Tarikh-e sahafat-e Urdu*, vol. 1, Delhi, 1953, pp. 222–5.

40 *General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1843–44*, Calcutta, 1844, Appendix N, 'Minute by F. Boutros, Section V'.

Qiranu's-Sa'adain (the conjunction of two fortunate planets). Sprenger mentions it in the preface of his voluminous book on *Sira* entitled *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad* in the following words.

> Im Jahre 1845 zum Beispiel gründete ich zu Delhi eine illustrierte Zeitschrift im Geiste des Penny Magazine. Sie hatte den Titel Kiran alsa'dayn, d.h. die Conjunction der beiden Glücksplaneten Jupiter und Venus, worunter der Occident und Orient zu verstehen war. Es war dies der erste Versuch dieser Art. Elf Jahre später, als ich Indien verließ, hatte ich das Vergnügen, über ein Dutzend Nachahmungen zu sehen.[41]

Contrary to the journalistic norms of the day, *Qiranu's-Sa'adain* opened new vistas for Urdu journalism and gave an intellectual tinge to it. Although like its contemporaries, it, too, published political and literary news, its real purpose was the introduction of Western ideas, especially scientific ones, to the Indian people. Sprenger wished that the gap between East and West, at the intellectual level, should be reduced and each should benefit from the other's cultural heritage. A. Shakespeare's note on *Local Newspapers in the North-Western Provinces of the Year 1848* considers *Qiranu's-Sa'adain* as 'the highest in character [which] furnishes information of a more varied and valuable [kind] than any weekly in the native languages published in these provinces.'[42]

Sprenger's goal of introducing the knowledge and wisdom of the West to the East and vice versa is reflected in this journal in which he tried to imitate the tone and spirit of *Penny Magazine*. [*Penny Magazine* was a popular weekly periodical of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in London. It was begun in 1832 and was edited and published by Charles Knight. Though it gave preference to such articles which could help in disseminating 'useful knowledge', it did not shun belles-lettres altogether. It even published synopses of famous literary and artistic works. The woodcut illustrations were especially popular. Monica C. Grobel in her aforementioned thesis on this society discusses in

41 Vol. 1, Berlin 1861, preface, p. vi: 'For example in the year 1845 I founded an illustrated journal in Delhi on the pattern of 'Penny Magazine'. Its title was Qiranu's-Sadain, that means the conjunction of two auspicious planets, Jupiter and Venus, which referred to the Occident and the Orient. It was the first attempt of its kind. After eleven years, when I left India, I felt great pleasure to see more than a dozen journals of its imitation.'

42 *Board's Collections, 1850–1*, vol. 2418, document 130.777, F/4/2418, OIOC.

detail the contents of this magazine which are very similar to *Qiranu's-Sa'adain* (II, pp. 447–68).][43]

It would not be out of place to mention here that the issues of the *Qiranu's-Sa'adain* are not easily available and only some scattered numbers, covering the period from 1848 to 1854, have been preserved in the National Archives of India (New Delhi), Idara-e Adabiyat-e Urdu (Haidarabad), Library of Jami'a Masjid (Mumbai), and the private collection of Kasim 'Ali Sajan Lal (Haidarabad). To this meagre stock, we can add 32 issues, which are lying in the 'Nachlaß Sprenger' of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Berlin). Of these, the first one is of 11 May 1846. It was edited by Saiyid Qadir 'Ali. The remaining numbers, spreading over the years from 1846 to 1850, were printed under the editorship of Pandit Dharam Narain. On comparing the contents of this collection of *Qiranu's-Sa'adain* with other weekly newspapers like *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin, Muhibb-e Hind* and *Khairkhwah-e Hind* of the same period,[44] which were also brought out by the Delhi College, one finds a striking similarity of topics. All of them gave prominence to the educational, social, and literary activities of the local people and thus followed the policy and pattern set by Sprenger in 1845.

VI

During his principalship, Sprenger also set up a printing press under the name of *matba'u'l-'Ulum* in the Delhi College. One of his close associates and an editor of *Qiranu's-Sa'adain*, Saiyid Ashraf 'Ali was appointed its manager, who with only a skeleton staff at his disposal tried hard to make this first experiment of its kind successful. At this printing press of the Delhi College, not only the magazines of the college but also the books of the Vernacular Translation Society were published. Though the press was nominally attached to the college, in reality, Sprenger had set it up as

43 *The Penny Magazine*, vols 1–9 (New Series, vols 10–14). Edited by Charles Knight. 14 vols, London, 1832–45; continues as *Knight's Penny Magazine*, 2 vols, London 1846 (no more published).

44 *Board's Collections, 1850–1851*, vol. 2418, op. cit., 'Native Presses and Publications in the N.W. Provinces'.

a limited company and most of the teachers were its shareholders—they were thus able to increase their income because the profit earned from the annual sale of publications was equally distributed among them. This printing press was installed at a time when there were very few presses in Delhi. Later on, when many more printing machines were installed in the city, its business declined. Gradually the investment was withdrawn by the shareholders, and eventually it almost stopped working. Besides, after Sprenger's transfer to Lucknow, its connection with the Delhi College was severed and it became a totally independent press. In 1852, Saiyid Ashraf 'Ali, in one of his Urdu letters written to Sprenger, stated the deteriorating condition of the press, and pointed out that owing to the competition it was not possible for the press to make substantial profits. In the end, he requested Sprenger to save this enterprise which was unique in the printing history of the subcontinent. Saiyid Ashraf 'Ali was so disgusted with the rapidly declining situation that he decided to hand over the press to one Karim Bakhsh.[45]

VII

Sprenger used to encourage the learned staff members of the Delhi College in their literary and scholarly pursuits and supported them in every respect for the accomplishment of their mission. He also had close contacts with the intelligentsia of the city. This interaction inspired many persons to work on different aspects of Indian history, literature and culture. Thus, on the initiative and suggestions of Sprenger, a number of significant books were written. It is not possible to enumerate all of them in this article, but a few can be mentioned in passing.

The most significant book among these was Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan's *Asaru's-Sanadid*. In the introduction of his book *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad* Sprenger emphatically claims that among other books, this one was also written at his suggestion.[46]

45 Ibid.; *Dihli College Urdu Magazine*, op. cit., pp. 43–4; Muhammad 'Atiq Siddiqi, *Suba shamali wa maghribi ke akhbrat wa matbu'at (1848–53)*, Aligarh, Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, 1962, pp. 186–92.

46 Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1861), preface, p. vii, fn. 2.

In the *Catalogue* of his collection known as *Bibliotheca Orientalis Sprengeriana* he repeats this claim.[47] When Sprenger reviewed the first edition of the book in 1851 in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta), he confidently declared that Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan had undertaken this project at his behest.

Asaru's-Sanadid is one of the earliest works of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan. In a sense it is a 'guide' to the main historical buildings and monuments of Delhi and even today it is considered a standard book on the subject. The convoluted and artificial, although sonorous, prose style of its first edition (1847), however, was beyond the ken of an average reader. In its considerably revised 1854 edition its verbosity was removed and a more natural plain style, which was to become the hallmark of Sir Saiyid's later writings, was adopted. This was, perhaps, done on the advice of Sprenger, who strongly believed in popularizing simple and easily understandable Urdu.[48] In 1846, Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan also translated a Persian treatise on mathematics into Urdu. He himself acknowledges in the preface of the book that he did so on the suggestion of Sprenger.[49]

Though Sprenger was primarily devoted to the dissemination of scientific knowledge in the local languages, he, by no means, neglected the other spheres of human activity. Though not a devotee of Sufism, he was still carried away by the intrinsic beauty of mystical poetry both in Urdu and Persian. It was this passion of his which prompted him to get the poetry of Mir Dard published. The work, at his request, was compiled and edited by Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i (d. 1857), a Persian teacher at the Delhi College.[50] In the same period, a book on Urdu grammar, bearing the title *Faiz ka Chashma*, was written by Maulawi Ahmad 'Ali, another teacher at the college. In its preface the author states that Sprenger inspired him to work on this book.[51] Maulawi Karimu'd-Din of Panipat, a brilliant student of the Delhi College, who was subsequently appointed to the Agra College, was close associate of Sprenger.

47 Giessen 1857, p. 15, no. 235.

48 New annotated edition in three volumes. Edited by Khaliq Anjum, op. cit., 1990.

49 *Fawa'idu'l-Afkar fi 'Amalu'l-Farjar*, Delhi, 1846 (See, *Qaumi Zaban*, Karachi 58/1 (January 1987), pp. 9–12).

50 Delhi, 1847, See Garcin de Tassy, op. cit., vol. I, p. 410.

51 MS (copied in 1847), in OIOC No. Urdu 153a.

He never published his writings without Sprenger's consent and approval. All the works that he authored during his stay at Delhi and Agra were undertaken on Sprenger's advice and encouragement and he acknowledges his debt to Sprenger at the beginning or end of each of his books.[52]

VIII

Sprenger remained principal of the Delhi College for about three years (March 1845–December 1847). During this period he was anxious to introduce a radical change, both in the system of instruction and in the courses of study. He ranked the literature of Indian Muslims amongst the greatest in the world and wished to preserve it at all costs. But at the same time he strongly recommended that drastic changes ought to be made in the prevalent syllabi of madrasas so that students could be aware of the political, social, and educational conditions around them. This suggestion of his evoked a severe reaction among both the students and teachers, but Sprenger did not budge an inch from his stance and continued his efforts to modernize the courses.

Sprenger was an Orientalist of great originality and immense erudition. His meritorious services in the realm of Islamic studies in general and for enriching Urdu language and literature in particular with Western learning, were widely recognized by eminent local scholars and influential government officials. He became so popular that one of his Tyrolean friends, David R. Schönherr (1822–97), praised him highly in an issue of *Tiroler Schützen-Zeitung* (Innsbruck) in 1850, when Sprenger was only 37. He wrote: 'Sprenger ist in ganz Indien ein bekannter Name. Briefe mit der einfachen Adresse: "Dr Alois Sprenger in Indien", treffen ihn, mag er sein wo er will.'[53]

Sprenger wrote to H.H. Wilson in a letter of 1841 from Dresden that 'there is probably no hope to succeed in India as a civil

52 Karimu'd-Din, *Tabaqat-e shu'ara-e Hind* (Anthology of Urdu Poets), reprint Lucknow, 1983 (Delhi 1847), pp. 467–73; also Preface by Mahmud Ilahi; Garcin de Tassy, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 166–77, esp. 170–1 (fn. 2).

53 'Dr Alois Sprenger in Indien', no. 55, 9.7.1850, p. 237 f.: 'Sprenger is widely known in India. Letters, having the simple address: Dr Alois Sprenger in India, will reach him wherever he may be.'

practitioner without the assistance of government, since the English have a distrust and in many cases a jealousy against foreigners',[54] but the situation was entirely different from what he presumed before coming to India. During his 14 years' stay in the subcontinent he held some very influential and high-ranking positions, such as those of the extra-assistant resident in Lucknow and head of the Calcutta madrasa, Examiner of Junior Civil Officers and Persian translator of the Fort William College in Calcutta, but, unfortunately, he was removed from all these civil appointments because he had supposedly dishonoured a transaction with Felix Boutros, the ex-principal of Delhi College, which was made when the latter had taken leave for two years because of ill-health. As claimed by Boutros in 1855, Sprenger had agreed to pay him 200 rupees from his salary of 600 as the principal of the college every month for a period of two and a half years. The first two years were to cover the period of the proposed absence. The remaining six months were those during which he was expected to wait for an appointment on his return. Boutros could not come back due to his decaying health and Sprenger did not honour his commitment. Eventually the matter was brought to the notice of Lord Canning, the Governor General of India, who, with the approval of the Court of Directors, made a decision on 29 July 1856. He declared that Sprenger's 'conduct...had not been consistent with that character for integrity and honour which the Court hold to be essentially necessary in all those entrusted with high functions connected with Public Education', and removed him from all his civil appointments and placed his services at the disposal of the commander-in-chief.[55] Sprenger was only allowed to complete the remaining volumes of his *Catalogue of the Kings of Awadh's Royal Libraries*, which disappeared afterwards and have not yet been found.[56]

54 H.H. Wilson Collection, Correspondence 1841, MSS Eur E 301/6, OIOC.

55 See Lord Canning Papers, HAR/Lord Canning 83/item 48, Leeds Archives Department.

56 Only the first volume of this *Catalogue* appeared in 1854 from Calcutta, reprint Osnabrück, Biblio-Verlag, 1979.

4

Azurda

Scholar, Poet, and Judge

Swapna Liddle

Muhammad Sadru'd-Din Khan, who wrote poetry under the *takhallus* 'Azurda', is relatively little known today. He was, however, one of the pillars of Delhi society for several decades spanning the middle of the nineteenth century. The important official posts he occupied under the British administration as Sadr Amin and then Principal Sadr Amin, his proficiency as a poet of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, and above all his renown as a scholar and teacher made him one of the leading figures of nineteenth-century Delhi.

What makes his life of particular interest is that through his role in the British administration, his connections with the great religious scholars of his time, and his participation in the social and literary life of the city, he spanned the many lines along which change was taking place. This change, which was in many ways related to the colonial takeover of Delhi early in the nineteenth century, was manifest, among others, in the literary and intellectual spheres. One significant way in which Azurda was involved with these developments was through his role in the Delhi College. His standing within the college gave him a chance to influence to a degree the nature of the contact between Western and indigenous learning.

Azurda was born in 1789 in Delhi of an illustrious family. His ancestors came to India from Kashmir during the reign of Akbar. Having started off as traders, succeeding generations in time took up more intellectual pursuits. The family produced some prominent scholarly figures like Maulawi Khairu'd-Din Abu'l-Khair (who went on to become one of the primary compilers of *Fatawa-e 'Alamgiri*, the famous book of Islamic law). Another member of this lineage was Maulana Fakhru'd-Din Aman Ullah Shahid who died in battle in the conflict between Nadir Shah and Muhammad Shah in 1738.[1]

Azurda was taught by some of the prominent teachers of the time, that is, Shah 'Abdu'l Aziz and his brothers and also Fazl-e Imam Khairabadi. Fazl-e Imam was at this time *sadru's sudur* of Delhi. His son Fazl-e Haqq and Azurda were fellow students and friends. Azurda evidently spent a lot of time in this household, receiving instruction not only in subjects like logic, philosophy, mathematics, and geometry, but also in the manners and refinement that were the mark of good breeding.[2]

The obvious career choice for an ambitious and able young man in early nineteenth century Delhi was service under the government of the East India Company. The influence of Fazl-e Imam, who was in British service, is also likely to have led Azurda in that direction and helped in bringing him to the notice of the administration. Sometime around 1816–17 he was employed in the judicial department at Delhi as a Sadr Amin.[3] He soon impressed his British superiors. Middleton, the acting deputy superintendent of Delhi, in 1821, praised him for 'a character for activity, integrity and ability that is rarely equaled'. He also remarked that though several hundreds of matters decided by Azurda had come before him in appeal, he had not seen cause to reverse a single of the latter's orders and decrees. In fact, wrote Middleton, such was his reputation even among litigants that he was often chosen by both parties to arbitrate their case.[4]

1 'Abdu'r Rahman Parwaz Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, New Delhi, Maktaba Jamia, 1977, p. 13.

2 Ibid., pp. 16–17.

3 Foreign Department Political Proceedings, National Archives of India, New Delhi (henceforth FP), 5.6.1832, no. 14.

4 H. Middleton to David Ochterlony, dated 1.11.1821, FP 24.11.1821, no. 27.

In 1821 Ochterlony, who was at the time the British resident, needed the assistance of someone to objectively analyse and clarify for him some points of a dispute between Bharatpur and Alwar. He decided to consult Azurda, 'whose character, talent and integrity, had often been the subject of praise before' him. Azurda impressed Ochterlony so well with his handling of this matter that the latter requested his deputation to accompany him to Rajputana when he left for that place as Agent to the governor general at the end of 1821.[5] On his departure, a friend of Azurda's was appointed temporary Sadr Amin in his place exclusively on Azurda's own recommendation, in the hope that Azurda would continue to give his friend advice on difficult questions of law from a distance.[6] Azurda returned from Rajputana sometime in the first half of 1825, Ochterlony's policy in that region having come under a cloud.[7] Ochterlony died soon after and Azurda returned to his post in the judicial department. By 1841 he was Principal Sadr Amin,[8] a position he held till the revolt of 1857.

Azurda probably came to be associated with the Delhi College much before he was officially made a member in 1841 of the Local Committee that was responsible for 'controlling the affairs of the Delhi College and Institution'.[9] Taylor, the secretary of the Local Committee, had generally superintended the Oriental College as well as the English Institution, the part of the college where Western learning was administered. However, as was rather tardily noted in 1840 when questions were raised about the functioning of the College, he was 'no Oriental scholar'.[10] Azurda, who was generally respected for his learning and in addition was a government employee, was probably called upon frequently to give advice. When J. Thomason visited the college in 1841 to assess the standard of the teachers and students, and the general running of the place, he found himself relying heavily on Azurda. He discovered

5 David Ochterlony to George Swinton, Secretary to Government, dated 28.11.1821, FP 18.12.1821, no. 8.

6 H. Middleton to George Swinton, dated 13.1.1822, FP 2.2.1822, no. 13.

7 George Swinton to David Ochterlony dated 10.4.1825, in Narendra Krishna Sinha (ed.), *Selections from Ochterlony Papers, 1818–1825 in the National Archives of India*, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1964, p. 393.

8 Home Department Public Proceedings, National Archives of India, New Delhi (henceforth HP), 30.6.1841, no. 19.

9 HP 23.6.1841 no. 20.

10 HP 15.7.1840, no. 9.

that Azurda was functioning practically as a member of the Local Committee though he had never been formally appointed to the post. It was Thomason's recommendation that this 'learned intelligent and most highly respected native' be formally made a member of this body, which led to the official appointment.[11]

As a member of the managing committee, Azurda took active part in the affairs of the Delhi College and played a role in shaping its profile. He helped in the appointment of competent teachers. In 1842 it was he who suggested the names of Ghalib, Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i, and Momin as possible candidates for the post of the Persian teacher, and it was Sahba'i who eventually got the job.[12] Mamluku'l 'Ali was made head Arabic teacher on his recommendation.[13] He corrected exam papers of the Arabic classes and also examined applicants from outside the college who applied for scholarship places in the Persian and Arabic section.[14] The famous novelist and educator Nazir Ahmad described years later the almost public spectacle of Azurda sitting in a room in the college, with the principal sitting next to him, examining students, probably new applicants. People, including an inquisitive young Nazir Ahmad, thronged the verandah outside, looking in.[15] Azurda also took an interest in the promotion of Urdu within the college, instituting a medal for the best essay in that language.[16]

Azurda's interest in education was not limited to the Delhi College. For much of his life he taught students after working hours in his own house.[17] This was in the tradition of learned men in Delhi who invariably taught students quite apart from following their regular vocations. Azurda had himself studied under Fazl-e Imam in this manner. Early in the 1840s his enhanced resources following his rise in the British administration enabled him to do more in this direction by opening a formal educational institution. He applied for and received from the Mughal emperor

11 HP 30.6.1841, no. 19.

12 Maulawi Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli Kalij*, New Delhi, Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu (Hind), 1989, pp. 162–3.

13 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 38.

14 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli Kalij*, pp. 54–5, 113.

15 Farhat Ullah Beg, *Daktar Nazir Ahmad ki Kahani, Kuch Meri aur Kuch un ki Zabani*, New Delhi, Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu (Hind), 1992, pp. 43–4.

16 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli Kalij*, p. 63.

17 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 27.

Bahadur Shah the use of the dilapidated buildings of the Daru'l-Baqa to the south of the Jama Masjid. This was an institution dating from Shah Jahan's time but had fallen into disuse. Azurda had the buildings repaired, appointed competent teachers and enrolled students who were entirely supported by the institution.[18]

For Azurda, his contribution to the Delhi College and the revival of the Daru'l-Baqa were simply different avenues for promoting education in Delhi. While he was associated with the Delhi College in a more or less official capacity, his initiative vis-à-vis the Daru'l-Baqa was an extension of what he considered his private obligation to the spread of learning. British officialdom, however, did not quite see it that way. While the local agent appears to have encouraged Azurda's Daru'l-Baqa project, the government of the North-West Provinces (within whose jurisdiction Delhi fell), was less than enthusiastic. The agent was asked to convey 'to the Maulvie the Lt. Governor's hope that he will not suffer his attention to be diverted from the Government Madrassa of which he is one of the Managers, by too much solicitude for any other minor institution of that kind which may be established in the city.'[19]

The government's attitude as reflected in this letter is quite interesting. On the surface it was a rather crude statement of the expectation that the government had the right to demand all of its employee's time and energy. At a more subtle level it indicated the view that the Delhi College represented the only kind of education that was worth bothering about. Other institutions, presumably along lines that were more 'traditional', could be dismissed as 'minor'. Clearly the government was not interested in the growth of education generally in Delhi but in education as represented by and in fact confined to the Delhi College. For Azurda this might have come as a bit of an eyeopener. He had addressed the government on this issue pointing to his achievement with pride and hoping for support and encouragement. The letter made the government's agenda quite clear.

At the same time one must not discount the possibility that Azurda's aim really was to set up an alternative to the Delhi

18 Saiyid Ahmed Khan, *Asaru's-Sanadid*, Delhi, Urdu Academy, 2000, p. 283.

19 Secretary to Agent, 8.3.1845, North-Western Provinces Proceedings, 8.3.1845, nos 19–21. I am grateful to Margrit Pernau who gave me this reference.

College. As the years went by it seemed to all appearances that the Delhi College was primarily dedicated to the study of Western sciences, economics, history, etc. In 1843 the 'Western' and 'Oriental' sections of the college had been brought on par from the point of view of syllabus and examination questions. Soon the two sections, which had been housed in separate buildings so far, were brought under one roof. Increasingly too the emphasis was on the study of English. In 1845, out of a total of 460 students, 245 were studying English, 75 Arabic, 109 Persian, and 31 Sanskrit.[20]

It must have been clear to Azurda that any initiative in the field of a more traditional education had to come through private effort. The endowment of E'timadu'd-Daula, which had been expressly given in 1829 to the Delhi College for the promotion of 'Oriental' learning, had in effect been appropriated by the government to develop the 'Western' part of the institution.[21] In addition, 'reform' of the Oriental section in the years following took it in a radical new direction. This involved a restructuring of the regular curriculum by restricting it to 'useful subjects'. Instruction in subjects like advanced Arabic syntax and logic, authoritative works on *fiqh* (Islamic law), and *hadis* (traditions of the Prophet) was relegated to 'free lectures'.[22] Despite boasting of noted scholars like Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i and Mamluku'l-'Ali among its teachers, the Oriental section does not seem to have had a particularly outstanding reputation for education based on Arabic and Persian. Altaf Husain Hali, who came to Delhi in the 1850s to study, at the time subscribed to the opinion of the teachers and students of his own madrasa that the students of the Delhi College were ignoramuses.[23] We know of at least one student, Nuru'l-Hasan Kandhlavi, who began by enrolling in the Delhi College but left to study under Azurda and Fazl-e Haqq. He later taught other students of Azurda, and also Saiyid Ahmad Khan who himself at some point was taught by Azurda.[24]

20 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli Kalij*, pp. 46–8.

21 Margrit Pernau, 'Preparing a Meeting Ground: C.F. Andrews, St. Stephen's, and the Delhi College', introduction to C.F. Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. lxvii–lxviii.

22 Haqq, *Marhum Dihli Kalij*, p. 40.

23 Malik Ram, *Qadim Dihli Kalij*, Delhi, Maktaba Jamia, 1976, p. 27.

24 Nuru'l-Hasan Rashid Kandhlavi, 'Baqayat e Azurda', in Nazir Ahmad (ed.), *Tanqidat; Intekha-e Maqalat Ghalib Nama*, Delhi, Ghalib Institute, 1997, p. 190.

Neither was the Western learning being imparted at the college unequivocally accepted by the intellectual elite of the city. As late as 1848 Saiyid Ahmad Khan wrote a tract refuting the Copernican understanding of the universe, that the earth revolved around the sun.[25] There is no doubt that the fear of proselytizing within the college was also fairly widespread among the people of Delhi. There is some evidence that this was a matter of concern to Azurda and he tried to use his influence to discourage students from reading missionary pamphlets.[26] In the early 1850s, it appears that he had a role in dissuading some potential converts to Christianity in the Delhi College, though he was careful not to take too strong a stand, probably due to his official position.[27]

Azurda's connection with the Delhi College was just one aspect of his role as a servant of the British government that caused conflict in his life. He was a man well respected in Delhi and his standing did not primarily stem from his official post. One has to only read the accounts of contemporary *tazkira* writers (compilers of short biographical notes, frequently on poets) to get a feel of the reverence with which he was regarded, particularly for his learning. This is even after one accounts for the customary hyperbole characteristic of such biographical portrayals. Saiyid Ahmad Khan called his account on Azurda in *Asaru's-Sanadid*, a *madah*, or eulogy. Karimu'd-Din, who was closely associated with the Delhi College, and Sabir, who was from the royal family of Delhi and lived in the Palace, were equally extravagant in their praises.[28] The famous poet of the time, Ghalib, wrote a Persian *qasida* or panygeric ode praising Azurda.[29] Yet he did on occasion have to suffer social approbation on account of his official position. For instance, he held the Naqshbandi Sufi saint Shah 'Abdu'l-Ghani in high esteem, but the latter refused to accept monetary

25 Altaf Husain Hali, *Hayat-e Jawid*, New Delhi, Qaumi Council Bara'e Farogh Urdu Zalam, 1999, p. 69.

26 Avril A. Powell, 'Muslim Reaction to Missionary Activity in Agra', in C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright (eds), *Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation c. 1830–1850*, London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1976, p. 51.

27 Avril A. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1993, p. 216.

28 Khan, *Asaru's-Sanadid*, pp. 523–6; Qadir Bakhsh 'Sabir', *Gulistan-e Sukhan*, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy, 1982, pp. 112–13; Karimu'd-Din, *Tabqat Shua'ra-e Hind*, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy, 1983, p. 446.

29 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 56.

help from him on the ground that it came out of a salary paid by the British.[30]

As a leading citizen Azurda was closely involved in the city's social, intellectual, political, and religious life. As a result, not only was he likely to be affected by any conflicts that arose vis-à-vis the colonial government but also by any strife among people representing different points of view within Delhi's intelligentsia. In his religious inclinations he held the moderate ground relative to the more aggressively reformist trend popularized by Saiyid Ahmad Barelwi and his not inconsiderable following in Delhi. One of his oldest fatwas, dating from about 1824–5, confirms the unlawfulness of the practice of kissing the tombs of saints.[31] On the other hand he wrote a tract refuting the position of Ibn Taimiyyah who declared visits to saints' shrines unlawful. He also answered in the affirmative the question of whether namaz should be offered in the Jama Masjid while relics such as the *qadam sharif*, the imprint of the Prophet's footstep, were kept there.[32] In 1850 he wrote a refutation of the charge of heresy against Ibn al Arabi, Faridu'd-Din Attar, and Maulana Rumi, proponents of *wahdatu'l-wujud*.[33]

Azurda was closely associated with Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz and his family, having received his religious education under them. When some of the younger members of the family, Shah Isma'il and 'Abdu'l-Hayy, became followers of the militant ideology of Saiyid Ahmad Barelwi, he set himself apart from their views but never launched a personal attack on them.[34] On the other hand his childhood friend Fazl-e Haqq engaged Muhammad Isma'il in a furious debate.[35] Years later Azurda was to recall that his role had been one of mediation between the two groups.[36]

One source of Azurda's popularity in Delhi indubitably was his

30 Ibid., p. 25.

31 Kandhlavi, 'Baqayat-e Azurda', p. 200.

32 Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India, Deoband, 1860–1900*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 66–7; Mukhtaru'd-Din Ahmad, 'Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda ki Kuch Nayab o Kamyab Tahrirein', in *Tahqiqat: Intekhab Maqalat Ghalib Nama*, Delhi, Ghalib Institute, 1997, pp. 107, 110–11. The latter also lists some other written opinions of Azurda.

33 Kandhlavi, 'Baqayat-e Azurda', p. 199.

34 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 69.

35 Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India, Deoband, 1860–1900*, pp. 65–6.

36 See his letter to Shefta in Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 90.

persona as a poet and patron of poetic gatherings or *musha'iras*. He wrote poetry in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, though never enough to warrant a *diwan* or a published collection of his works. He wrote a Persian tazkira of poets, only part of which survives.[37] Much of his extant prose is in Arabic or Persian, with the exception of some letters in Urdu. Abu'l-Kalam Azad's father, Khairu'd-Din, was to later remember Azurda's great love for Arabic literature which he also taught his students.[38] His appreciation of Arabic poetry was generally acknowledged.[39]

Though he did not produce much Urdu verse, Azurda's competence in it was acknowledged by his contemporaries. Sabir, for instance, placed him at the forefront of those he considered most proficient in the correct use of Urdu.[40] Azurda preferred a simple style free from too many unfamiliar words and abstruse meanings. It is said that he, along with Fazl-e Haqq, prevailed on Ghalib to abandon the difficult style reminiscent of 'Bedil'.[41] It is not unlikely that Ghalib would have taken his advice because he had a very high opinion of Azurda's competence as a poet. He protested against their mutual friend Mustafa Khan 'Shefta's initial non-inclusion of Azurda in his tazkira of Urdu poets, and on more than one occasion praised Azurda's poetry to him.[42]

Azurda's home also became a venue for regular musha'iras.[43] He had bought the mansion near Matia Mahal known as 'Hazara Begh *ki haveli*' and renovated it. By all accounts it was a beautiful mansion with water channels, fountains, and gardens.[44] The building figures on a street to the east of the Jama Masjid under the name of 'Haveli Sadru'd-Din Khan' in a map dating around 1850. It is represented as a large structure with a considerable court and greenery.[45]

37 Mukhtaruddin Ahmad, 'Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda ki Kuch Nayab o Kamyab Tahrirein', pp. 113–16.

38 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 46.

39 Ghalib to Abdu'r-Razzaq 'Shaqqir', in Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam (eds), *Ghalib: Life and Letters*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 323.

40 'Sabir', *Gulistan-e Sukhan*, p. 68.

41 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 58.

42 Ghalib to Shefta, in Tanvir Ahmad Alavi (ed. and trans.), *Auraq e Ma'ni; Ghalib ke Farsi Khutut*, Delhi, Urdu Academy, 2001, pp. 157, 165, 169.

43 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 48.

44 Khan, *Asaru's-Sanadid*, pp. 702–3.

45 See the large map in Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft (eds), *Shahjahanabad/ Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change*, New Delhi, Manohar, 2003.

The revolt of 1857 constituted an upheaval in the life of Delhi and Azurda could not but be swept into it. His role in the revolt is controversial. The more or less contemporary accounts claim that he was 'innocent' of the charge of rebellion, which is why he got away with a relatively light punishment.[46] On the other hand, later accounts seek to rehabilitate Azurda from a nationalist point of view. Muhammad Miyan, for instance, claims that two such writers, Zaka Ullah and Faqir Muhammad were writing at a time when it was impolitic to make statements implicating in the revolt anyone who had been acquitted.

The nationalist defence of Azurda begins with the argument that he supported the movement of Ahmad Ullah Shah, the famous 'maulawi of Fyzabad'. The latter, whose name originally was Saiyid Ahmad 'Ali Khan, was the son of Nawab Muhammad 'Ali Khan of Chinapatan. As a youth he visited England, stopping for a while in Mecca on his way back. On his return to India he travelled to north India and became interested in mysticism. He was initiated into the *qadri* order by a saint of Gwalior after which he came to be known as Ahmad Ullah Shah. His preceptor also apparently called on him to spread the message of jihad against the British.[47]

It is said that Ahmad Ullah Shah also visited Delhi, but received a lukewarm reception. Azurda, however, helped him by advising him to take his movement to Agra. He also gave him a letter of introduction to Mufti In'am Ullah Khan Bahadur. The latter was a lawyer in Agra who had worked as a *sarishtadar* in Delhi during the Residency of Colebrooke. In'am Ullah Khan treated Ahmad Ullah Shah hospitably and introduced him to influential people in Agra. As a result, Ahmad Ullah Shah soon built up a following and went on to play an important role in the uprising of 1857.[48]

Details such as when he actually came to Delhi are missing from the account of Ahmad Ullah Shah, beyond a suggestion that it was some years before the revolt. In any event if he came to Delhi to

46 Zaka Ullah and Maulana Faqir Muhammad Jhelumi are both quoted in Saiyid Muhammad Miyan, *'Ulama- e Hind ka Shandar Mazi*, vol. 4, Delhi, Maktaba Burhan, 1963, pp. 192 and 243.

47 See Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri, 'The Profile of a Saintly Rebel: Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah', *Social Scientist*, vol. 26, January–April 1998, p. 39.

48 IntizamUllah Shahabi, *East India Company aur Baghi 'Ulama*, Delhi, Dini Book Depot, n.d., p. 21.

rally support for his cause, it would have been very natural for him to try and elicit support from an influential and well-respected man like Azurda. We are not absolutely certain about what Ahmad Ullah Shah's proclamations at this point of time amounted to. Was he actually preaching armed revolt against the government, or was it a call to counter the rather aggressive missionary campaign that had reached a high pitch in parts of the doab by this time?[49] If his movement was at the time avowedly violent and anti-government, it is out of character for Azurda, who held government office, and was cautious by temperament, to have lent overt support. If all he was doing was calling for a rallying of forces in the polemical war against the missionaries that was erupting in religious disputations particularly in Agra, Azurda might not have seen any harm in directing him to the centre of the action. As has been mentioned above, Azurda does appear to have expressed some anti-missionary feeling. In any case it is an incident that does not necessarily prove Azurda's 'revolutionary' sympathies.

It might be more helpful to look at what we know of Azurda's actions during the course of 1857. It seems that Azurda was in the courts near the Kashmiri Gate when the rebels entered Delhi, and witnessed the taking over of the city.[50] His subsequent activities must be pieced together largely from the accounts of spies who were working for the British within Delhi. According to entries in the diary kept by Munshi Jiwan Lal, soon after the rebels entered the city, Bahadur Shah sought to appoint Azurda city magistrate or in a similar judicial capacity. Azurda, however, refused, once pleading bad health, and once that he could not accept 'as long as the English remained unconquered'.[51] Yet in the days following, Azurda continued to be present in the emperor's court from time to time.[52] While this was later held against him, it does not unequivocally place him in the rebel camp. Just as the rebels had realized from the very outset that controlling the emperor meant giving an incomparable legitimacy to their cause, so would anyone

49 Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India.*

50 Khwaja Nasir Nazir 'Firaq' Dehlavi, *Lal Qile' ki ek Jhalaq*, Delhi, Urdu Academy, 2001, pp. 69–70.

51 Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny*, Westminster, Archibald Constable & Co., 1898, pp. 90, 168.

52 Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny*, pp. 177, 193; Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, pp. 73–4.

seeking to turn public opinion in another direction first attempt to gain the emperor's support. There is in fact some evidence that Azurda was less than enthusiastic about support to the rebels. Further, there were hints that he was in correspondence with those who were spying for the British and had promised them help.[53]

One factor that has redeemed Azurda in the eyes of those seeking to prove his nationalist credentials is the claim that he was one of the signatories to the *'jihadi fatwa'*.[54] This was the legal opinion signed by several experts in Islamic law giving sanction to a jihad against the British. The version published in the *Sadiqu'l-Akhbar* definitely mentioned Azurda as one of the signatories, but the original was not forthcoming once the city had been recaptured by the British. The Special Commission that tried Azurda for complicity in the rebellion in fact acquitted him of this charge. This was partly because the original document was missing, and partly because Azurda was able to produce a certificate signed by Hodson (who had since died) to the effect that Azurda had authored another contrary fatwa declaring such a jihad illegal.[55]

Another fact that has been used by later biographers and in fact was a point against him in his trial, was that he had employed *ghazis* who were stationed at his house. It is useful to quote the diary of Jiwan Lal on this point. The entry for 9 August 1857 reads: 'The house of Moulvie Sadar u din Khan was attacked today by fifty soldiers; but, seeing that there were seventy Jihadis ready to oppose them, they retreated, but carried off two colts from the house of Ahsanullah Khan.'[56] Who were these jihadis, and why did Azurda come under attack from the soldiers?

The answer to these questions can be pieced together from several contemporary reports. A letter from a spy dated 29 July says: 'the *shurafa* of Delhi are quite fearful, they are not confident of their safety in this war... there has been a guard at the houses of *mufti* Sadruddin Azurda and *nawab* Hamid Ali Khan for several days'.[57]

53 Salim Qureshi and Ashur Kazmi (trans. and ed.), *1857 ke Ghaddaron ke Khutut*, Delhi, Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu (Hind) 2001, pp. 150, 153, 164; C.B. Saunders, Commissioner, Delhi, to R.H. Davies, Secretary to Government of Punjab, FP 1.4.1859, no. 1.

54 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, pp. 77–80.

55 Saunders to Davies, FP 1.4.1859, no. 1.

56 Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny*, p. 191.

57 Qureshi and Kazmi, *1857 ke Ghaddaron ke Khutut*, p. 112 (my translation).

Mu'inu'd-Din Hasan Khan later said that the houses of several *shurafa* had been plundered on the suspicion that they were friendly to the British and had sheltered Europeans. Hamid 'Ali Khan's house was among these. As a result, several well-to-do men of the city got together and bought up a regiment on a monthly payment, to protect their lives and property.[58] The diary of Jiwan Lal also mentions that by 15 May 'a private police force had been raised by the better class of citizens to protect themselves and their property from plunder and violence'.[59] It, therefore, seems probable that the jihadis protecting Azurda's house were in fact these paid guards. Even more unequivocal is the report we have of Azurda on one occasion flatly refusing a demand of money from the court, saying that the ghazis he had employed would be used for his defence.[60]

It is, in fact, clear that the months when the revolutionary force was in Delhi was a time of social upheaval. The thousands of soldiers who were centred on the city not infrequently resorted to forced levying of monetary and other exactions to keep the campaign going. In addition it also seems that many of the poor took advantage of the opportunity to do some looting on their own account, sometimes in the guise of soldiers. The raising of a private guard therefore seemed a logical step. Both indiscriminate looting and more formal levying of contributions could be better resisted through force of arms.

On the other occasions on which we hear mention of Azurda's name during the course of the revolt, he emerges in the role of peacemaker. We find him interceding with those intent on jihad on the cow slaughter issue.[61] Some Muslims had protested strongly against the ban on cow slaughter which had been ordered by the emperor to preserve peace. The situation became explosive and some butchers lost their lives. On another occasion we see the emperor asking him to 'let it be known that he would not again sit in the Public Hall of Audience until the soldiers returned the property plundered from Hakim Ahsan Ullah's House.'[62] Evidently he continued to wield some influence over the populace of

58 Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny*, p. 59.

59 Ibid., p. 93.

60 Qureshi and Kazmi, *1857 ke Ghaddaron ke Khutut*, p. 68 (my translation).

61 Iqbal Husain, 'The Rebel Administration of Delhi', *Social Scientist*, 26, January–April 1998, p. 33.

62 Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny*, p. 193.

the city and was willing to use it in the interests of maintaining peace. He also continued till the end to counsel the emperor. In the beginning of September when defeat stared the revolutionaries in the face, we hear of consultations being held in Azurda's house till late at night. The next morning a deputation was sent by him to meet the emperor.[63] At the same time he agreed on behalf of the Muslims of the city to collect money for the forces within 15 days. The spy making this report believed that he did this because he was confident that the British would be in the city by then.[64]

In any event there was sufficient ambiguity about his role to induce the Special Commission that tried him after the revolt to release him from custody but at the same time confiscate all his property. He, of course, lost his government post too. Like many others who were driven to seek shelter outside the city, he went to live in the locality of Nizamu'd-Din.[65] Deprived of all means of subsistence, he went to Lahore and appealed before the lieutenant governor who asked for a report from the commissioner of Delhi. Saunders, while he did not personally believe that Azurda was innocent, thought it cruel that he had been set free without any means of financial support in his old age. On his recommendation, seconded by that of the lieutenant governor, it was ordered that half his property be restored to him.[66] He, thus, got back his house and enough property to secure him a modest rent.[67] What was irretrievable was the loss of his valuable library which had been auctioned by the prize agents in Delhi.[68]

He also had to suffer the loss of several friends and contemporaries. His childhood companion Fazl-e Haqq was exiled to the Andamans. Mustafa Khan 'Shefta', probably his closest friend, was imprisoned. Imam Bakhsh 'Sahba'i', acclaimed Persian poet and teacher at the Delhi College, was among the scores shot dead on the sands beside the Yamuna in the madness that gripped the invading force that recaptured Delhi for the British.

63 Letter of Turab 'Ali dated 2 September 1857, Qureshi and Kazmi, *1857 ke Ghaddaron ke Khutut*, p. 171 (my translation).

64 Letter of Fateh Md Khan, 2 September 1857, ibid., p. 172.

65 Russell and Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters*, p. 224.

66 FP 1.4.1859, nos 113–15.

67 Ghalib to Ahmad Hasan Maududi, 19 January 1862, in Khaliq Anjum (ed.), *Khutut-e Ghalib*, Delhi, Ghalib Institute, 1987, vol. 3, p. 1030.

68 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 83.

Azurda's feelings found an outlet in poetry. In the tradition of the *shahr ashob*, poetic comments inspired by social upheavals, he wrote verse that is an important insight into his feelings about the revolt. Unlike Ghalib's *Dastanbu*, which was clearly intended for presentation 'to the British authorities as a means of winning their favor and patronage',[69] Azurda's compositions do not seem to have been written with any such motive. They can, therefore, be better relied on as an expression of the poet's honest opinions. They tend to confirm the impression that Azurda was not a supporter of the revolt.

At the very beginning one gets a clear idea of how he viewed the revolt, and the participation of Bahadur Shah and his family. Note his use of *'kale'* (black men). The word was generally used in this context in opposition to *'gore'* (white men, i.e. the English), but also had connotations of 'dangerous' and 'treacherous'. He says:

Afat is shahr pe qile' ki badaulat a'i
Wan ke a'mal se dilli ki bhi shamat a'i
Roz mau'ud se pehle hi qiyamat a'i
Kale Merath se kya aye ke afat a'i.[70]

(Misfortune befell this city due to the fort;
It was the evil deeds of that place that invited punishment on Delhi.
Doomsday dawned before the appointed day
When the black men came from Meerut, misfortune arrived.)

He goes on to write at length about the impact of the upheaval on the city, primarily in terms of the misfortunes of the upper classes. He speaks of gentlewomen, brought up behind the *pardah* being turned out onto the streets, of the young dandies, the shops and amusements that are no more. He wonders if the city will ever again flourish:

Aish o ishrat ke siva kuch bhi na tha jin ko yad
Lut gaye kuch na raha ho gaye bilkul barbad
Tukde hota hai jigar sun kar un ki yeh faryad
Phir bhi dekhenge ilahi kabhi Dehli abad?

(Those who knew nothing but a life of gaiety;
They have lost everything, are completely destroyed.

69 Russell and Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters*, pp. 132–3.
70 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 218.

My courage fails when I hear their lament—
'Will we ever see Delhi flourish again?')

He grieved the loss of his friends, in the process not forbearing to comment on the atrocities perpetrated by the victors after the event:

Tukre hota hai jigar, jan pe ban ati hai
Mustafa Khan ki mulaqat jo yad ati hai
Kyonkar Azurda nikal jaye na sauda'i ho
Qatal is tarh se be jurm jo Sahba'i ho

(My courage crumbles, I feel I could die
When I remember the times spent with Mustafa Khan (Shefta).
Why should Azurda not be driven insane
When the innocent Sahba'i is thus murdered?)

In a ghazal in the same vein he gave tongue to his own physical and emotional tribulations:[71]

Rahe ham na kuch Mustafa Khan ke gham mein
Na fik- e sukhan, na parhane ke qabil.

Hame qaid karne se kya naf'a said
Na the hum to dam men lane ke qabil.

Hu'e hain woh naqabilon mein shumar ab
Jinhe mante the zamane ke qabil.

Woh Azurda jo khush bayan the nahin ab
Ishare se bhi kuch batane ke qabil.

(I am destroyed by grief for Mustafa Khan,
Incapable of poetry, not fit to teach.

What does it profit you to imprison me O fowler,
I was not worthy of the being brought into the net.

They are now counted among the unworthy
Who were once the worthies of their time.

The eloquent Azurda is no longer able
To even express himself in signs.)

Azurda spent the rest of his life quietly at home. His role in the public life of the city as it limped back to recovery was limited.

71 Ibid., p. 197.

He contributed to the efforts made to have the Jama Masjid restored to the Muslims,[72] and was part of the managing committee 'elected by the majority of the Mussulman inhabitants' when the transfer did take place.[73] Apart from advanced age, his health was not good. Towards the end of 1863, he suffered a stroke that impaired his speech and the use of his right hand.[74]

Of course, Azurda no longer had his government job; his other responsibilities had also been taken away. The Delhi College, in particular its library and laboratories, had been destroyed by the mutineers. In fact, when the time came to reopen it, Azurda was one of the few links from the earlier era who were still left. As such he was also a source of valuable information, because of the destruction of important records. In 1864, as preparations were made to reopen the institution, Henry Thornton, the deputy commissioner of Delhi wrote to him asking if he had any recollection of the terms of the E'timadu'd-Daula endowment. Had the money been given unconditionally, or had some conditions been attached, and if so was it possible to obtain any document detailing them? Thornton also expressed the hope that Azurda would soon be in good enough health to play a role in the management of the newly reopened college.[75]

Azurda's school, Daru'l-Baqa, had been demolished, as had many buildings in the city after the revolt.[76] He, however, continued his practice of teaching students, some of whom lived in his home and were supported by him. This and the fact that he had to support some relations meant that his financial situation was straitened and he was forced to solicit help. He wrote to the nawab of Rampur requesting a stipend by way of charity. Kalb-i 'Ali Khan sanctioned him a sum of Rs 200 per month.[77]

72 Shahabi, *East India Company aur Baghi 'Ulama*, p. 61.

73 Fredrick Cooper to Commissioner, Delhi, dt. 17 September 1860, DC.

74 Ghalib to Alau'd-Din Khan, dt. 13 December 1863, in Russell and Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters*, p. 295.

75 Thornton to Azurda, dated 5 July 1864 and 16 April 1864 in Ahmad, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda ki Kuch Nayab o Kamyab Tahrirein*, pp. 122–3.

76 'Memorandum Regarding the Financial Condition of the Jama Masjid', Molana Saiyid Ahmad (Imam) to Deputy Commissioner, Delhi, dt. 3 October 1911, Records of the Deputy Commissioner's Office (henceforth DC), Delhi State Archives.

77 Ahmad, 'Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda ki Kuch Nayab o Kamyab Tahrirein', p. 125.

In a letter to Shefta he looked back on his life and was not entirely satisfied with what he saw there. He recollected his many official duties—giving judicial decisions and handling the paperwork involved, sitting on committees, examining students of the Delhi College, signing thousands of documents. He enumerated his many preoccupations after work—teaching students, writing answers to questions pertaining to the *shari'a* that came in from far and wide, mediating the differences of opinion between the reformist and conservative wings of Muslim opinion, attending occasions of celebration as well as mourning, attending and organizing musha'iras, visiting gardens, and organizing religious charity. He recollected that he had been so busy that he had often not had the time to offer the prescribed prayers properly.

But that was not the only reason he felt answerable to God. Was not his service under the British, though he purported to write fatwas according to Islamic law, unlawful according to his religion? Though he had a dislike of that job he did not leave it and nobody could criticize him because of the weight of his dignity. In the 40 years that he was in service, he had made thousands win and thousands lose, hundreds of shareholdings had been auctioned by his orders, many were sentenced to death and many to imprisonment. He was guilty of many other sins besides. He felt that his imprisonment and trial was a blessing as it had extracted him from the mire that was his life before the revolt. Now that his career, his property and his books were gone he had become unworldly.[78]

Not all of this must be taken literally. These were the musings of a man towards the end of his life, who had gone through severe tribulations. For a religious man to talk in terms of suffering being the wages of sin would not be unusual under the circumstances. But the specific manner in which he mentions his doubts about his service under the British is interesting. He also told two of his pupils, Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, 'to keep at their religious work and avoid the kind of 'illegitimate' government service he himself held'.[79] Clearly, the conflict he had faced between his service with the government and his religious and social obligations continued to prey upon Azurda's

78 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, pp. 90–1.

79 Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India, Deoband, 1860–1900*, p. 78.

mind. Writing to another pupil, he expressed a wish to spend the rest of his days in the study of religious books.[80]

The practicalities of life, however, did not allow a complete severance of connection with worldly matters. Pressed by financial needs, he made overtures to Nawab Yusuf 'Ali Khan of Rampur and found it politic to convince this undoubted friend of the English of his credentials. He wanted to demonstrate that he was still well regarded by high officials in the government. To this end, in a letter towards the end of 1864, he included copies of recent letters from various important British officials—John Lawrence who had always been kindly disposed towards Azurda and was now governor general, the financial member of the Supreme Council, the commissioner of Delhi and the deputy commissioner of Delhi. He had also been visited by the latter two gentlemen and proudly said so.[81]

Azurda died on 16 June 1868. The *Akmalu'l-Akhbar* reported that the funeral procession came towards sundown into the Jama Masjid, where a large crowd had gathered. Namaz was read and the body was then taken to be buried in the complex of the dargah Chiragh Delhi.[82] The nawab of Rampur had sent 500 rupees to the widow for funeral expenses.[83]

In many ways Azurda exemplifies the situation faced by the Muslim service gentry in early colonial north India. The pecuniary and social status conferred by service under the colonial rulers was attractive, particularly when faced with few alternatives. The persistence of precolonial institutions, at least in form—the application of Islamic law, the use of Muslim law officers, the use of Persian and then Urdu in the courts—provided an environment that was not entirely alien. Azurda's salary as Sadr Amin in the early 1820s was Rs 250 per month.[84] He was able to maintain a prosperous lifestyle—acquiring a beautiful house and other property, owning one of the few phaetons in town, etc. He was also able to play the social role that was expected of him as a religious and literary scholar, and wealthy citizen—teaching, promoting

80 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 93.

81 Ahmad, 'Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda ki Kuch Nayab o Kamyab Tahrirein', p. 120.

82 Aslahi, *Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda*, p. 96.

83 Khaliq Anjum (ed.), *Khutut-e Ghalib*, vol. 3, p. 1257.

84 H. Middleton to G. Swinton, dt. 13 January 1822, FP 2.2.1822, no. 13.

education, religious charity, giving religious opinions, sponsoring poetic gatherings, etc. Yet there was room for conflict. For Azurda this took the form of occasional criticism particularly from religious figures opposed to cooperation with the colonial power, the conflict over indigenous versus Western learning, and the issue of Christian proselytizing.

The conflict came to a head during the revolt of 1857, when these issues were transformed unequivocally into a question of loyalty. Confronted with the choice Azurda wavered. He chose to remain in Delhi and in close contact with the emperor, but did not participate in the rebel government. What might finally have tilted the balance for him was the social face of the revolt. The upper classes in Delhi were generally scared by the insecurity the revolt brought in its wake. More than the exaction of regular contributions for the campaign, opportunistic looting and the general disorder that characterized the period when Delhi was occupied by the rebel soldiers, weakened their support for the cause.

Morally too the situation was not clear cut. The Mughal emperor had long lost all sovereignty and any sense of legitimacy had been seriously eroded. '*Jihadi fatwa*' notwithstanding, it was not always clear that this struggle could be defended on religious grounds. Nationalism as we know it was not an element that entered into the equation. Azurda reacted in a manner that was consistent with his position in society and the age he lived in. When it came to choosing, he chose a status quo he was familiar with. What became clear only later was that for him things had changed anyway—fundamentally and irrevocably.

5

Shaikh Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i

Teacher, Scholar, Poet, and Puzzle-master

C.M. Naim

'Do you know where Sahba'i's grave is?' asked our genial host, Mr Muslim Ahmad, a grandson of the famous novelist Shamsu'l-Ulama Dr Nazir Ahmad. The question came as a shock. A few months earlier I had diffidently agreed to undertake this essay, but Muslim Sahib did not know that! I had gone with some friends to have his darshan in his ancestral home. And we had only talked about his grandfather and the family. Then, totally out of the blue, came the question. Was that his way to test my avowed interest in Old Delhi and its people? Was it Sahba'i somehow nudging me in the right direction?

Of course, I did not know where the grave was. Greatly satisfied, Muslim Sahib then confided, 'It's on the main steps of the mosque in the former Delhi College.' An hour later, my friends and I had gathered around the grave. It had no headstone, and its grimy marble slabs were cracked and falling apart. That only convinced us more. The solitary grave, prominent and yet nameless and crumbling, we agreed, could belong to no one else. Sahba'i's tragic death in 1857 could not have been commemorated too publicly by his friends, and yet their regard for him demanded that they should place him to rest where he belonged—within the precincts of the college where he had taught for 17 years.

Shaikh Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i was born in Delhi in 1247/1802–3.[1] His father was Shaikh Muhammad Bakhsh—most likely a scholar-teacher by profession—who had moved to Delhi from Thanesar. On his father's side, Sahba'i traced his ancestry to the Caliph 'Umar, and on his mother's side to Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani of Baghdad. The family lived in Kuche Chelan, a neighbourhood preferred by many similar families of teaching scholars. Sahba'i's early education must have been under his own father, but subsequently he studied with Maulawi 'Abd Ullah Khan 'Alavi (d. 1846), an accomplished teacher of Persian language and literature at the time.[2] He also studied Arabic and other subjects, including *tibb* (medicine), with him.[3] Sahba'i's innate talent and his devotion to learning soon brought his formal education to completion, but he could earn only a meagre living by giving tuitions. He went to Mainpuri to find some steady job but, disappointed, returned to Delhi after one year. He also sought to gain some patronage from the emperor Bahadur Shah II (r. 1837–57), but the two panegyrical offerings he made—one in prose, the other in poetry—apparently did not gain him much. A physical description of Sahba'i and some details of his early jobs are given by Maulawi Karimu'd-Din (1821–79), who knew him well:

> Maulawi Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i [is of] medium height. He has a full head of hair, the 'wheatish' complexion of a fairer hue, and a slim body. His face is lightly pock-marked in spots.... A witty man and a lover of learning, he spends his days and nights teaching students.... The story of his early days is that he used to give tuitions around the city. As the word of his command of Persian spread and his labour with his students became known, he was

1 Khwaja Muhammad Hamid, *Imám Bakhsh Sahbá'i: Shakhs, Shá'ir, Shárih*, Kamti, 1982, p. 54. Hamid establishes the year on the basis of a remark by Sahba'i in *Sharh-e Nasírá-e Hamdání*. Hamid's is the only comprehensive study of Sahba'i's life and writings, and this essay owes much to it. I also wish to thank Frances Pritchett, James Nye, and Shamsur Rahman Faruqi for their help.

2 On Alavi, see Saiyid Ahmad Khan, *Ásáru's-Sanádíd*, Delhi, 1965, reprint, pp. 621–30, and Mirza Qadir Bakhsh Sabir, *Gulistán-e Sukhan*, Lucknow, 1982, reprint, pp. 362–71. Alavi wrote mainly in Persian, and knew tibb (medicine) well. Intizamullah Shihabi, in *Ghadar Ke Cand 'Ulamá*, describes two remarkable students of 'Alavi's, Delhi, 1979, reprint, pp. 9–10. See fn. 28 below.

3 Sahba'i's only brother, Shaikh Pir Bakhsh, became a respected practitioner of tibb. He received the title of Hakím-e Dauráñ (Physician of the Age) from the Emperor Akbar Shah II, and was appointed the court physician by the Nawab of Bahadur Garh, Khan, 1965, pp. 514–15.

appointed to teach the children of some of the elite in the city. Specific times were also fixed for him at the homes of some wealthy Kashmiris and some of the jaggery-sellers. He gave lessons at these places and thus earned what he needed to survive. Eventually he was appointed to teach the sons of Nawab Hamid Ali Khan.[4]

Sahba'i's luck changed for the better only in 1840, when he received a permanent appointment at the Delhi College to teach Persian. The story is variously told.[5] Here is how Karimu'd-Din tells it:

When the Lieutenant Governor, Mr [James] Thomason,[6] a learned man and also one to show true appreciation of other men of learning, came to Shahjahanabad to see to the administration of the madrasa [i.e. the Delhi College], he tested the students. He then proposed that a teacher of Persian, excelling and energetic [*musta'id*], should be appointed in the College. A search began for such a person. Mufti Muhammad Sadru'd-Din Khan [Azurda], who is presently the Sadr-al-Sudúr of Shahjahanabad, told Mr Thomason that there were three rare experts in Persian in the city: the first, Mirza Nausha Sahib [i.e. Ghalib], the second, Maulawi Imam Bakhsh Sahib, and the third, Hakim Muhammad Momin Khan. The Lieutenant Governor sent for the three. Mirza Nausha Sahib, because he did not care to take up any job, declined the offer. Hakim Momin Khan Sahib asked that his salary should be fixed at Rs 100 per month. Maulawi Imam Bakhsh Sahib, since he didn't possess any other source of income except the many tuitions, accepted the offer. His salary was fixed at Rs 40 per month, and he was made the Senior Teacher in the Persian Section. He started teaching [at the College] in 1840.... After a while his salary was increased to Rs 50 per month and that is what he gets presently [1847].[7]

Sahba'i's appointment at the college brought him financial security,[8] as well as social status. He also found in Felix Boutros, the principal of the college, someone who appreciated his learning.

4 Karimu'd-Din, *Tabaqát-e Shu'ará-e Hind*, Lucknow, 1983, reprint, pp. 413–14. Hamid Ali Khan was for a while the Prime Minister of the Emperor Bahadur Shah II.

5 'Abdu'l Haqq, *Marhúm Dihlí Kálij*, Delhi, 1945, pp. 152–3; R. Russell and K. Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters*, London, 1969, pp. 62–3.

6 Thomason was then the Secretary to the lieutenant governor; he was made the lieutenant governor in 1844.

7 Karimu'd-Din, 1983, pp. 414–15.

8 Even with the increment, Sahba'i's salary was only half as much as that of Maulawi Mamluk 'Ali, the senior teacher for Arabic. Could it be indicative of the nascent decline in importance of Persian for the British and also the Muslim elite of north India?

Boutros asked Sahba'i to undertake some academic projects in Urdu, whose prompt completion brought Sahba'i further recognition. Unfortunately for Sahba'i, Boutros left the college in 1845 for medical reasons. The new principal, Dr Aloys Sprenger, apparently found his work wanting. That stopped Sahba'i's further promotion, but he always remained greatly popular and much admired among his students.

Sahba'i had two sons and at least one daughter. Both sons received instruction in the usual subjects from Sahba'i himself, and some of his commentaries on prevalent textbooks were initially undertaken with them in mind. Not much is known about Abdul Aziz, the older son, except that he wrote poetry in Urdu and used Aziz as his *takhallus* (pen-name).[9] The younger son, 'Abdu'l-Karim, could have been a prodigy much like Sahba'i, or else he was prodigally loved by his father. Our only source for both sons is the *tazkira*, *Gulistán-e Sukhan* (1854), by Mirza Qadir Bakhsh Sabir (1808–82), who late in his life had taken Sahba'i as his *ustád* (teacher, master) and claimed to be very close to his sons.[10] According to *Gulistán-e Sukhan*, 'Abdu'l-Karim had made a name for himself as a teacher of Persian and as a poet in Urdu—his takhallus was Soz—when he was barely 20.[11] Apart from the flowery note and a copious selection from his ghazals, Soz finds prominent mention in that book three more times. After devoting 14 lines to his choice of the major Urdu poets of his time—Ehsan, Shah Nasir, Mamnun, Zauq, Ghalib, Momin, Shefta, and Nayyir, in that order—the author spends 19 lines in his preface telling us how Soz may eventually surpass them all. Next, while discussing Urdu's poetic genres, Sabir quotes a 90-verses-long *tarjí'-band* by Soz. Finally, in the note on Zauq, who died the year the book was completed, Sabir quotes an elegy of 249 verses that he says Soz wrote on the occasion.[12] Soz is also mentioned as their ustád in the notes on four very young poets, including three of his second-cousins.[13] Tragically, the two sons, along with any male members

9 Sabir, 1982, pp. 355–7.

10 It was commonly said at the time and is generally believed now that Sabir's book was mostly, or even entirely, written by Sahba'i. Its long introductory section is such a display of eclectic erudition that only a professional teacher could have managed with such aplomb. See Hamid, 1982, p. 198.

11 Sabir, 1982, pp. 269–78.

12 Ibid., pp. 66–7, 101–5, 221–31.

13 Ibid., pp. 211, 251, 371, 457.

of their extended family, had to share their father's terrible end in September 1857.

The most detailed account of that tragedy is provided by Mu'inu'd-Din Hasan Khan, who was the *kotvál* (chief of police) at Paharganj and spent the entire period in question in Delhi:

In those days no questions were asked. Most young and robust men were killed on sight by the British troops, and only an individual's good fortune saved him from death. Nawab Muhammad 'Ali Khan, son of Nawab Sher Jang Khan...who resided in Kuche Chelan, was a slim and emaciated man, moody and confused in mind; he shut the doors of his house and did not leave the city. Some of the White and Gurkha troops of the British army who were plundering homes in the city, arrived at the Nawab's door. When no one responded to their poundings, some of the Whites climbed up the wall. The wet-nurse of the Nawab's two-year-old daughter saw them and immediately jumped into a well with the baby in her arms. She was followed by the Nawab's wife and two or three other ladies. They all perished. The Nawab, seeing all this, grew disgusted with his life and, picking up a gun, killed the three Whites. The others ran back and informed their regiment. A company of troops then arrived with a cannon, and blew the Nawab's house to bits...[Then] they arrested 60 men from the notable families of the neighbourhood, took them to the river's bank, and shot them dead. Two of them were government servants: Miyan Shaikh Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i, the teacher at the madrasa, and his son.[14]

A slightly different version comes from a survivor, Maulawi Qadir 'Ali, a nephew of Sahba'i's who lived with him in Delhi. Years later he told Rashidu'l-Khairi:

One early morning I was in the mosque in Katra Mihr Parwar with my uncle [*mámúñ*] Maulana Sahba'i. The prayers had just started when, suddenly, the Whites came marching in. They grabbed the Imam's turban and used it to tie our hands behind the back. The conditions in the city were horrific; Delhi was like what the Place of Judgment would be. Informants had accused us of rebellion, that is why we were all arrested and brought to the river's bank. Not a week had passed [since the capture of the city], and prisoners were being shot instead of being hanged. The soldiers readied their guns. There were some thirty or forty of us lined up in front of them. Just then a Muslim officer came to us and said, 'Your death is imminent. There are guns in front of you, and the river behind you. So those among you who can swim should jump into the river.' I was a good swimmer, but 'Mamun Sahib' [i.e. Sahba'i] and his son, Maulana Soz, could not swim. I could not bear to save my life

14 Mu'inu'd-Din Hasan Khan, *Khadang-e Ghadr*, Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi (ed.), Delhi, n.d., pp. 82–3.

and leave them behind, but 'Mamun Sahib' urged me. So I jumped into the river and swam away. But I kept looking back. I had gone 50 or 60 yards when I heard the gunshots and saw the line of people falling dead.[15]

What then happened to the dead is not known. If Muslim Sahib's information is correct, at least Sahba'i's body was brought back and buried on the eastern steps of the college mosque. But an elegy on Sahba'i's death, quoted by Intizamullah Shihabi, suggests that the dead did not get a decent burial.

> I don't know what happened to that immaculate corpse—
> Did an angel bear it away? Did it remain on Earth?
> Did someone find a grave-cloth for it,
> Or was it left lying, merely a shadow on the ground?
> I don't know what the heavens decreed for his body—
> Was it wrapped in a shroud, or in the sun's blazing heat?[16]

Did Sahba'i take any part in the great rebellion? Azurda in a widely quoted verse, described him as being 'guiltless'.

> Why shouldn't Azurda go crazy and run to the wilderness
> When Sahba'i is killed so brutally, though he was guiltless?[17]

I recall coming across Sahba'i's name with reference to some 'advisory committee' set up at the Fort, but unfortunately I am not able to trace down the source now. He could have been a member of the citizens committee—14 Hindus and 14 Muslims—that Bakht Khan set up to raise funds in the city, and in which Azurda was to lead the Muslims.[18] Sahba'i must have felt some affinity with

15 Rashidu'l-Khairi, *Dillí Kí Ákhirí Bahár*, S. Zamir Hasan (ed.), Delhi, 1991, pp. 93–4. Khairi was a major writer of books for women, and a memoirist of bygone Delhi. Though both accounts mention only Soz, the other son is not mentioned as a survivor by anyone.

16 *Nadánam kujá raft án, na'sh-e pák//malak burd yá mand bar rú-e khak. Nadánam kase dád ú rá kafan//va yá mand cún sáya bar khák-e tan. Nadánam ci kard-ast bá ú sipahr/ / zi jama kafan kard yá táb-e mahr*, Shihabi, 1979, p. 25. Shihabi refers to a book, *Sahífa-e Rahmání*, but does not give the author's name. Another footnote implies that he himself was the poet!

17 *kyuñkar ázurda nikal-jáe na saudá'í ho//qatl is tarh se be-jurm jo sahbá'í ho.*

18 Salim Qureshi and S. Ashur Kazimi (eds), *Is Ghar Ko Ág Lag-ga'í: Ghaddároñ Ke Khutút*, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 122, 172. Azurda's own role during the rebellion is best described as self-preserving. He signed the fatwa supporting the rebels and worked on their committees, but also cooperated with the British as shown in these recently published letters and reports, pp. 153, 164.

the larger goals of the rebel leaders in Delhi. Like Momin, whom he much admired, Sahba'i too was apparently in sympathy with the so-called 'Jihadi' or 'Wahabi' movement of Saiyid Ahmad and Shah Isma'il. Though, unlike Momin, he did not write concerning the two leaders who were killed at Balakot in 1831 during their 'jihad' against the Sikhs, Sahba'i did write an elegy on the death of Maulawi Amir Ali, who launched a 'jihad' in 1855 against the mahants of the Hanuman Garhi in Ayodhya to free a mosque from their control. Amir Ali's campaign was not supported by most Sunni and Shi *'ulama* of Lucknow. It was also forcefully opposed by the Nawab, Wajid Ali Shah, who sent troops and cannons to stop Amir Ali from reaching Ayodhya. In the ensuing battle, Amir Ali and his small band of supporters were massacred. On hearing the news, Sahba'i wrote an elegy, expressing great anguish and bitterness at what 'Lucknow' had done to the Maulawi; in it he denounced the authorities and the people of Lucknow in the strongest manner.

What Yazid did to Husain in Karbala
Was done to 'Ali by the people of Lucknow.
Every wall and door of the city now
Castigates the young and the old of Lucknow.
May God grant that clouds rise from the ocean,
Heated by his sorrow, and rain fire on Lucknow.[19]

The surviving members of Sahba'i's extended family, mostly women and children, became homeless and eventually took shelter with Azurda, who himself suffered imprisonment for four years and lost half of his property. We learn this from a letter that Ghalib wrote to Saiyid Ahmad Hasan Maududi:

[Azurda] lives in his own mansion and lives on the rent which he receives [from his other property]. He can manage on it, for he has 30 to 40 rupees a month coming in, and there is only himself and his wife. But Imam Bakhsh's children are closely related to him, and there are about 10 to 12 of them. So he doesn't live very comfortably.[20]

19 *bar husain án-c-az yazíd ámad ba-khák-e karbalá//bar 'alí ámad ham az ahl-e dayár-e lakhna'ú. har dar-o-dívár-e ú az shash-jihat nafríñ kunad//bar sighár-e lakhna'ú o bar kibár-e lakhna'ú. garmiy-e gham yá-rab az bahrash bar-angezad bukhár//báz abr átish bi-bárad bar bahár-e lakhna'ú.* M. Ayyub Qadiri, *Jang-e Ázádi 1857: Váqi'át va Shakhsiyát*, Karachi, 1976, pp. 114–15, quoting from Najmul Ghani Khan's *Tárikh-e Avadh*, vol. 5. The poem, consisting of 18 couplets, is not found in Sahba'i's *díván*.

20 Russell and Islam, 1969, p. 267.

Saiyid Ahmad Khan was not in Delhi when Sahba'i was killed. But when peace returned he took up the bereft family's cause and stayed in touch with them. Hali writes:

> A letter from Maulana Sahba'i's maternal grandson, Muhammad Hamidu'd-Din, came to Sir Saiyid from Thanesar while I was present. He had written, 'The late Maulana Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i was my grandfather [*náná*]. When he was executed for no reason during the Mutiny, you had a government pension set up for my grandmother and other survivors. My grandmother received the pension till the day she died. My parents told me that the favours your honour did to our family were beyond description.[21]

By most accounts, Sahba'i was a genial and witty man, known to high and low in the walled city for his learning. Though himself a man of limited means, he was welcome in the assemblies of the elite, and moved in the same circles as did his more famous and better-placed contemporaries such as Ghalib, Zauq, and Momin. It is said that he regularly attended the late afternoon gatherings at the house of Maulana Fazl-e Haqq and the late evening assemblies at the house of Mufti Sadru'd-Din Khan Azurda.[22] He also attended the *musha'iras* (poetic symposium) in the Red Fort, and was ustád in poetry to some of the princes. Most importantly, Sahba'i was an extraordinary teacher. Those who studied with him continued to remember him most fondly—with the one exception of Muhammad Husain Azad (to be discussed below). One of his many illustrious students was the historian and mathematician, Maulawi Zaka Ullah (1832–1910). The latter's biographer, C.F. Andrews writes:

> Concerning his professors at the [Delhi] College, [Zaka Ullah] used to speak with the greatest reverence and affection in after years, especially of his Persian and Arabic teacher, Maulawi Imam Baksh, whose nom de plume was Sahbai.... His personality made such an impression on young Zaka Ullah, that thirty years after, when he himself was lecturing as a professor of Persian literature, to the students of the Muir Central College, at Allahabad, he used to say to his pupils that he felt as if the presence of Maulawi Imam Baksh was with him while he was speaking to them. Of all the heroes of learning, in this Renaissance [at Delhi], he was the greatest.[23]

21 Altaf Husain Hali, *Hayát-e Jávid*, New Delhi, 1979, reprint, p. 748.

22 Maulana Abu'l-Kalam Azad, on the authority of his father, Shihabi, 1979, p. 13, quoting from Ghulam Rasul Mihr, *Ghálib*.

23 C.F. Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, Lahore, 1976, rpt, pp. 59–60.

And it was only their great affection for Sahba'i that made several of his students, some 20 years after his death, seek out his many writings and get them published as his *kulliyát* (collected works). In *Gulistán-e Sukhan* we find at least 35 persons identified as being his *shágirds* (disciple, student) in poetry, a majority of them also as having been his students at the college.[24] Interestingly, many of the former students wrote poetry in Persian, and almost all of those who wrote in Persian were non-Muslims.[25]

To further understand the man Sahba'i, his intellectual interests, and the literary-cultural milieu within which he strove to make his mark as a scholar and a poet, we will next examine briefly his relations with three of his contemporaries: Ghalib (1797–1869), who was five years older than Sahba'i; Saiyid Ahmad Khan (1817–98), who was 15 years younger; and Muhammad Husain Azad (1830–1910), who was not only 28 years younger than Sahba'i but had been his student at the Delhi College. All three subsequently gained far greater fame and recognition than Sahba'i.

Ghalib was born in Agra, but moved to Delhi to live with his wife's family when he was about 15. He was a prodigy—by the time he was 19 he had put together an extraordinary collection of ghazals in Urdu. Then, for more than 25 years, he wrote verse and prose almost exclusively in Persian, turning to Urdu again after 1850 when he received an appointment at the Mughal court. A man of some private resources, Ghalib never had to toil for a living; on the contrary, on account of his lineage and his sense of his own poetic genius, he expected, and also to some extent received, patronage from Indian and British rulers alike. Altogether, he was quite the opposite of Sahba'i. But their paths crossed regularly and frequently—at Azurda's and Fazl-e Haqq's homes and at the musha'iras in the city and in the Fort. Sahba'i himself wrote poetry exclusively in Persian, but he had many shágirds who sought his advice concerning their own Urdu verses. Thus, his must have been a prominent presence at all the musha'iras in Delhi.

24 This is a much smaller number, given by Sahba'i himself or with his full approval, than the 'thousands' that many later tazkiras and other books claim. See Hamid, 1982, p. 94.

25 Indicative, I think, of the lowering of interest in Persian as a cultural language among the Muslim elite. Among the non-Muslims, who studied Persian mostly as a language of professions, it continued to hold interest longer.

Sahba'i's *díwán* is quite small. It contains 61 ghazals, six panegyrics [*qasá'id*], and a handful of other verse. The ghazals were written mostly for presentation at musha'iras, for 19 of them share the *zamín* (rhyme scheme) with Ghalib's ghazals from the time. Most likely they were written for the monthly Persian musha'ira that was held by Nawab Ziau'd-Din Ahmad Khan Nayyir-e Rakhshan. In three of these ghazals, Sahba'i mentions Ghalib's name with admiration: twice with Azurda's name, and once alone. For example,

> The laments of Ghalib and Azurda took away my senses;
> I burnt twice over in the blaze of their breath.[26]

Sahba'i finds mention in only one of Ghalib's ghazals, and that too when Ghalib lists other major Persian poets of his time, namely Momin, Nayyir, Sahba'i, Alavi, Hasrati, Ashraf, and Azurda. In one of his letters, Ghalib did say something nice about one of Sahba'i's ghazals, but in many more letters he found occasion to make disparaging comments about him. The worst occur in the context of the controversy created by Ghalib's own critique, often in intemperate language, of Muhammad Husain Tabrizi's popular dictionary, *Burhán-e Qáti'*—though by then Sahba'i was long dead. One of Ghalib's detractors, Mirza Rahim Beg, claimed to have been a student of Sahba'i's, and referred to him at places as his authority. With reference to him, Ghalib wrote in 1865 to his own shágird, 'Abdu'r-Razzaq Shakir:

> [Mirza Rahim Beg] is a Meerut man... Delhi people say that he never studied under Maulawi Imam Bakhsh Sahbai, but gives it out that he did so as to increase his standing. What I say is, alas for the poor good-for-nothing who thinks that to have studied under Sahbai is a matter of pride and honour.[27]

Then, in an open letter to Mirza Rahim Beg, Ghalib wrote, 'You have called Maulawi Imam Bakhsh the Imam of All Scholars [*imám-al-muhaqqiqín*]. Tell me, how many scholars came together to name him their Imam... [In fact] if you had called him *Imám-*

26 *nála-e ghálib-o-ázurda zi kaf burd 'anán//sokhtam sokhtam az átish-e garm-e dam-e shán*

27 Russell and Islam, 1969, pp. 360–1.

al-Muhaqqiqain (i.e. the Imam of Two Scholars), then one of the two would have been you, and the other Narain Das the betel-seller.'[28]

Zaka Ullah, in a letter to Muhammad Husain Azad, expressed strong contempt for Ghalib as a man, including, 'Ghalib was so raffish [*rind mashrab*] that he would say, 'How can Sahba'i be a poet? He has never tasted wine, nor has he ever gambled; he has not been beaten with slippers by lovers, nor has he once seen the inside of a jail.'[29]

What Sahba'i thought of Ghalib in his private moments is not known, but one thing we do know. When Sahba'i put together an anthology of Urdu poetry at Boutros's request, Ghalib found no mention in it, while Zauq and Momin did. Muhammad Hamid and others ascribe the omission to the fact that Ghalib had almost stopped writing in Urdu when the anthology was prepared (1844). The excuse loses validity when we note that just three years earlier Ghalib had published his Urdu díwán from the same press—*Saiyidu'l-Matabi'*—that soon after published two of Sahba'i's books. Much of the blame—as I later point out—may be put on Boutros, but Sahba'i's own role in Ghalib's absolute exclusion cannot be entirely ruled out.

We can only speculate about the possible causes for this unpleasant relationship when, in fact, there was much in common between the two. Both cherished Persian at a time when the language was losing popularity and usefulness vis-à-vis its two rivals: Arabic and Urdu.[30] Both, allowing for their own exceptional cases, believed that Indians could not be expected to have the same

28 *Náma-e Ghálib*, included in Qazi Abdul Vadud (ed.), *Qáti'-e Burhán va Rasá'il-e Muta'alliqa*, Patna, 1967, p. 252. Narain Das, a Hindu betel-seller, had in fact studied with Sahba'i's teacher, Maulawi Abdullah Khan Alavi, and gained a name for himelf. Students would come to his shop and stand underneath to study with him, Shihabi, 1979, p. 9.

29 Hamid,1982, p. 89. Hamid gives a few more examples of Ghalib's unpleasant attitude towards Sahba'i.

30 By the 1830s, the British had raised the status of the 'vernaculars' in their administration, while allowing high value to Arabic and Sanskrit for 'cultural' purposes. Persian, while still considered a worthy subject to be taught, fell in their esteem. Among the Muslim elite. Arabic had always held a higher position than Persian. They were *expected* to know Persian—it was a given for them, and hence of lesser conscious significance. But if they wished to pursue *any* branch of conventional learning in depth they learnt Arabic, and studied Arabic texts with scholars.

authority concerning Persian language as native Iranians. And both admired the same kind of verse (Bedil's) and prose (Zuhuri's) in Persian. In social/hierarchical terms—that is, lineage, family wealth, status at the court and with the British—they were, of course, vastly different. The intellectual commonality and shared literary aspirations brought them together but also put them in a relationship of rivalry in which their social discrepancy, no doubt, left them open to misunderstanding and worse.

One such occasion, quite likely, was after Ghalib returned from his trip to Calcutta (1827–9), where he had a nasty disagreement with the local Persian poets. He tried to mollify through correspondence Nawab Amir Hasan Khan, the most powerful of his detractors there. We have access to two of those letters; in both Ghalib accuses unnamed rivals of turning the Nawab's mind against him.[31] One of these rivals apparently also corresponded with the Nawab. Interestingly, Amir Hasan Khan also finds mention in Sabir's tazkira, though by then he had been long dead in Calcutta. Sabir's note praises the Nawab's generosity and learning and his excellence as a poet—his takhallus was Bismil—then adds, 'Upon hearing of the praiseworthy qualities of my *Ustad*, [Maulana] Sahba'i, he developed a sincere affection for him; then further strengthened the ties by corresponding with him. He sent him a note in which only undotted letters were used, and yet it showed absolute spontaneity. There was nothing contrived about it.'[32] Ghalib possessed a copy of Sabir's tazkira, and called it 'Sahba'i's book'. One can well imagine his chagrin at finding that the man to whom he had himself written abject and unrequited letters was being claimed by Sahba'i as his own admirer!

'He is the one who adds hues to the looking-glass of eloquence; and he is the one who burnishes the mirror of expression. He is the gardener in the bower of verbal forms that are miraculous; and he is the one who unveils meanings, both bountiful and beauteous. He has used a new style to perform many an amazing feat; and he stands out among the virtuous in ways beyond estimate.'[33] So wrote Saiyid Ahmad Khan about Sahba'i in his first major book, *Ásáru's-Sanádíd* (1847). He went on to describe their close friendship

31 Tanvir Ahmad 'Alavi (trans.), *Auráq-e Ma'ání: Ghálib Ke Fársí Khutút*, Delhi, 1992, pp. 273–8.

32 Sabir, 1982, p. 154.

33 Khan, 1965, pp. 630–1.

as their 'having two bodies with one soul.' Saiyid Ahmad Khan was 15 years younger than Sahba'i and far above him in social status, but the two became very close friends. Hali writes, '[Saiyid Ahmad Khan] and Maulana Sahba'i were more like brothers than friends. In the beginning , it was at Sir Saiyid's house that the Maulana used to meet with the students who came to study Persian with him.'[34] That must have been the time when Sahba'i earned his living by teaching students at different places in the city and did not have the job at the college. There is no evidence to suggest that the young Saiyid Ahmad Khan was ever his student, either formally or informally. When Saiyid Ahmad Khan returned to Delhi in 1846 as a *munsif* in the British administration and stayed on for eight years, he privately studied only a number of religious and juristic texts in Arabic with two other scholars in the city.

It is also only in the context of the book *Ásáru's-Sanádíd* that we get any details of their close friendship. 'During holidays or vacations,' Altaf Husain Hali writes, 'Sir Saiyid would always go outside the walled city to examine the ruins and buildings there; he would even stay there overnight if the holiday was long. Very often, his friend and companion, the late Maulana Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i, would accompany him on these trips.'[35] Hali then quotes Saiyid Ahmad Khan as telling him:

> Some of the inscriptions on the Qutub Minar could not be read easily because they were just too high. I would get a reed basket hung between two long poles and have it suspended facing the inscription. I would then climb into the basket and make a copy of the inscription. At such times, Maulana Sahba'i, because of the great love he had for me, would become very nervous, and his face would turn pale from fear for my sake.[36]

A third reference to Sahba'i in the context of the above book requires more detailed consideration. While discussing Saiyid Ahmad Khan's prose style in his earliest writings, Hali argues that though Saiyid Ahmad Khan's pre-1857 publications do not show a distinctly new style, they nevertheless display the kind of 'simplicity' (*sádagí*) and 'lack of contrivance' (*be-sákhtagí*) that are commonly found in his writings. 'The very first edition of *Ásáru's-Sanádíd*, the language of which contained much in the way of 'contrivance'

34 Hali, 1979, p. 678.
35 Ibid., p. 65
36 Ibid., pp. 65–6.

(*sákhtagí*) and 'artifice' (*takalluf*), was written by Maulana Sahba'i, as Sir Saiyid himself used to acknowledge.'[37] Hali then gives his own explanation:

> It seems that though on account of his balanced nature [*tab'-e salím*] Sir Saiyid's own prose style at that time was plain and simple but, under the impress of his society, he definitely looked down upon such prose. And so he did not think it fit to write in his own plain words the account of [Delhi's] buildings that he had so painstakingly researched. He believed that it would be unworthy of those buildings. But he realized his error soon after the publication of that edition, and published the book again after rewriting it in his plain and simple and 'natural' style.[38]

Hali's expansion on Saiyid Ahmad Khan's remark implies that the archaeological descriptions and historical accounts were not at all written by Sahba'i, and that Sahba'i only recast what Saiyid Ahmad Khan wrote. A limited comparison of the two editions suggests that more might be involved. In the second edition, Saiyid Ahmad Khan not only excised the final chapter (on the notables of Delhi), he also drastically changed, in both content and style, the earlier descriptive chapters. He did not just 'make simple' the language, but also corrected errors of fact and removed a great deal that could have appeared to him and his new English patron as merely speculative. No doubt, in the first edition, Saiyid Ahmad Khan himself wrote the note on Sahba'i. It is a fine example of exactly the kind of language Sahba'i used and admired.[39] Similarly, the notes on Ghalib and some other senior persons that Saiyid Ahmad Khan had personal ties with must also have been written by him. But it is quite possible that most of the remaining notes on Delhi notables were written by Sahba'i alone; he had after all known the people in question much longer than Saiyid Ahmad Khan. Likewise, in my opinion, Sahba'i's contribution to the first three chapters could also have been more than what Hali and subsequent scholars have suggested.[40] As a conclusion to this

37 Ibid., p. 655.

38 Ibid. The reasons could have been more complex, since Saiyid Ahmad Khan made some other changes as well, including the dedication.

39 I believe the note was wholly written by Saiyid Ahmad Khan; he explicitly says so. Also, the solution given for one of Sahba'i's word-puzzles included therein is different in language and detail from Sahba'i's own. See fn. 54 below.

40 A detailed comparison of the two editions, using also the long 'historical' section in *Gulistán-e Sukhan* is still awaited.

debate, we can only note what Sabir (or Sahba'i himself) wrote about the second edition: 'Earlier he [Saiyid Ahmad Khan] wrote a book in Urdu on the buildings of Shahjahanabad and its environs...Now his noble ambition has led him to survey the area again. This time he has so much expanded upon his previous researches that no further increase can be imagined.'[41] Apparently their friendship remained strong, though no further collaborative work was undertaken.

Muhammad Husain Azad (b. 1830) studied at Delhi College for eight years (1845–53?), where he must have read many books with Sahba'i, since Persian was his main subject in the college's Oriental section. Azad's views on Sahba'i—never explicit, but strongly implied in several of his writings—are markedly different from those held by Zaka Ullah and other former students.

In 1845, Felix Boutros returned to Europe on sick leave, and Aloys Sprenger, was appointed the principal in his place.[42] It seems that Sprenger's taste in Persian was quite the opposite of Sahba'i's (and perhaps also Boutros's). In his very first annual report (1846), he wrote, 'The reason why instruction in the Persian classes is so poor is that the Maulawi Sahib is too fond of an elaborate and ornate style in prose and prefers the verse of the later poets.'[43] Sprenger was also very critical of the way translation and essay writing were taught by the Arabic and Persian Maulawis. *Contra* Boutros, Sprenger did not ask Sahba'i to prepare any book for the Society for the Promotion of Knowledge in India, more commonly known as the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society. Sprenger knew well both Persian and Arabic, and took an active role in examining the students. Azad could not have been unaware of the new principal's views on the syllabus and instruction in the Oriental section. Nor could Sprenger have been entirely unaware of the budding and impressionable scholar. Azad regularly took part in the annual Urdu essay competition. Though Sprenger was no longer the principal, he was present in Delhi and active at the

41 Sabir, 1982, p. 127. It is not generally known that in his younger years Saiyid Ahmad Khan also wrote ghazals in Persian; his takhallus was *Áhí*.

42 Sprenger held the position till February 1848; he was then sent to Lucknow to prepare his invaluable catalogue of the libraries of the nawab of Avadh. During his frequent trips back to Delhi, he took active interest in the affairs of the College.

43 Haqq, 1945, p. 41. (Loosely translated from Haqq's Urdu translation of the English original.)

college when Azad won the first of his two essay prizes. That year (1848), the acting principal's report noted, 'The essay contained much that is not included in the college's syllabus. It was perhaps due to the student being connected with the "Delhi Urdu Akhbar" and therefore being in the habit of reading Urdu newspapers and gaining useful information from them.'[44] It may not be too far-fetched, therefore, to speculate that Azad's own taste in literary and stylistic matters began to be formed at this time, as much in disagreement with Sahba'i's as in agreement with Sprenger's.

Our speculation is supported by what Azad later wrote about certain authors and texts in *Sukhandán-e Fárs*, his first book on Persian language and literature. Azad describes the century between AH 1000 and AH 1100. as that belonging to the *khayál-band* poets. They, according to Azad, embellished old metaphors and constructs by introducing a kind of complexity through a 'doubling or multiplying of the metaphor or simile in question.' He explains himself with two examples of such constructs: 'Earlier the poets would say, 'Cheek's Flower' [*gul-e 'áriz*], now they said, 'Colour of Flower's Cheek' [*rang-e 'áriz-e gul*]. Earlier they wrote, 'Flower of Excellence' [*gul-e khúbí*], now they wrote, 'Flower of the Garden of Excellence' [*gul-e gulzár-e khúbí*]. It made the expression subtler, but its meaning became that much more difficult.[45] After naming a couple of books with barely lukewarm notice, Azad continues:

> During that century, many creations came forth in the world of prose writing [*inshápardází*] that were quite grotesque [*'ajíb-al-khilqat*]. That is to say, certain books were produced [in that century] that had none of the purposes—scholarly, historical, or moral—that a book has. And yet they were books. One of them is *Sih Nasr-e Zuhúrí*.... What is the sum total of it? Only praise, i.e., flattery.... Subtle and delicate the contents [of these three pieces by Zuhuri] may be but one must laugh reading them.[46]

He then comments on three other such books—*Panj Ruq'a*, *Míná Bázár*, and *Shabnam-e Shádáb*—and completes his list of the 'grotesques' by mentioning the letters of Mirza Tahir Wahid. These five books were those which Sahba'i much admired—he wrote painstaking commentaries on all five—and which Azad had to study with him at the college.

44 Haqq, 1945, p. 45.
45 Muhammad Husain Azad, *Sukhandán-e Fárs*, Lucknow, 1986, reprint, p. 79.
46 Azad, 1986, p. 83.

In his own prose, ironically, Azad avidly used extended metaphors and personified abstractions, just like the authors he faulted. Consider, for example, his critique of Tahir Wahid's prose: 'He played on paper kettle-drums with his powerful pen, and shot off cannons in the air.'[47] That, of course, is the fascinating tragedy of Azad, the unreconciled conflict between his ambitions as a literary elitist and his aspirations to be publicly useful. He believed in a separation between the medium and the message, as one can see in his concluding remarks to that section in *Sukhandán-e Fárs*:

> My friends, do not ever consider these books to be utterly worthless. Their subtle ideas, lovely metaphors, ever new similes, attractive constructions, well-crafted words, flights of imagination, and crowds of rhetorical devices remain matchless... [But] one must read these books with extreme care. They employ elegant words, subtle metaphors, and powerful imagination with no purpose in sight. You must take the same, but use them purposefully. You will see how effective and attractive your own writing then comes to be.[48]

Returning to Sahba'i, it seems that Azad could not mention Sahba'i without casting some aspersion on him. In *Áb-e Hayát*, Azad's finest book, Sahba'i gets mentioned twice by name. First, in the section on Momin, Azad chooses from a long account that Shefta had sent him only the one incident in which a student of Sahba'i's seeks Momin's help to understand a difficult Persian verse. After Momin finishes explaining, the student remarks that what Sahba'i had earlier told him was as nothing compared to what he had just learnt. The second time is in Azad's account of Ghalib, where Sahba'i is mentioned as instigating Azurda in a musha'ira to question Ghalib on the latter's use of an idiom.[49] Equally telling, in the same section, while recounting the incident of the appointment of a Persianist at Delhi College, Azad faithfully mentions Ghalib and Momin but makes no reference to Sahba'i.[50]

Why did Azad feel so strongly against Sahba'i? I have no explanation to offer except that it could have been due to some incident during Azad's college days where Azad had felt slighted or unjustly

47 Ibid., p. 84. Also see fns 56 and 58 below.

48 Ibid., pp. 85–6.

49 Curiously, in his fictional account which was largely based on what he had heard from the elders of Delhi, Farhat Ullah Beg has Sahba'i publicly needling Ghalib on one occasion. See Mirza Farhat Ullah Beg, *Dihlí kí Ákhirí Sham*, Salahu'd-Din (ed.), Delhi, 1986, p. 78.

50 Muhammad Husain Azad, *Áb-e Hayát*, Lahore, 1917, pp. 426, 526, 507–8.

treated by Sahba'i. It certainly appears to have been more than a difference over literary issues.

Sahba'i was a prolific writer. Khwaja Muhammad Hamid has given a chronological listing of his extant writings.[51] It includes 34 titles, all in Persian except the three Urdu books he prepared at the request of Felix Boutros. Most of the books were published in Sahba'i's life—some, like the commentaries [*shurúh*], more than once—and also remained available for several years after his death, since many were used as textbooks. Eventually a need was felt by some of his former students to bring them all back into print. One of these students, Munshi Din Dayal, Head Munshi in the Agent's Office at Bhopal, set about collecting Sahba'i's published and unpublished writings, including his letters. Another student, Muhammad Husain Hijr, and Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, the consort of the Begum of Bhopal and a former student of Azurda, edited and annotated them. The collection was brought out by the Nizami Press of Kanpur in 1879; it was in two volumes, the second consisting of two parts. A second edition soon came out from the more resourceful Nawal Kishore Press of Lucknow, which subsequently reprinted many of the collected books separately.

I was not able to consult the Kulliyát, and have had access to only a few of Sahba'i's books. The discussion that follows, therefore, is selective, and seeks only to provide a glimpse into Sahba'i's favourite pursuits as a writer in Persian. These, in my opinion, were word-puzzles, explanatory commentaries, rhetoric and linguistics, and writing poetry. His works in Urdu will be discussed separately at the end.

Several of Sahba'i's writings deal with the art of mu'amma or word-puzzles. He seems to have been very fond of the genre, and took much pride in his expertise in it. Interestingly, Saiyid Ahmad Khan also seems to have been interested in word-puzzles at one time. In his note on Sahba'i in *Ásáru's-Sanádíd*, Saiyid Ahmad Khan particularly praised Sahba'i for his achievements in this art, and quoted several examples both approvingly and knowledgeably.[52]

51 Hamid, 1982, pp. 257–8.

52 Khan, 1965, pp. 639–43. Saiyid Ahmad Khan's fondness for word-puzzles is also evident in his note on Urdu—retained in the second edition—in which six of a total of 10 examples are of word-puzzles. Also see fn. 39 above. Similarly, Momin too shared Sahba'i's interest; his Kulliyát contains five or six word-puzzles in Urdu.

Sahba'i's many books on word-puzzles were not available to me, but Saiyid Ahmad Khan and Sabir, in their notes on Sahba'i', provide sufficient examples to give us some sense of his mastery of the art. Sabir also quotes in full a short poem in which Sahba'i first shows how the word *alláh* can be obtained from the word *'alí*—and also vice versa—then adds, in summary, the basic rules and conventions of mu'amma.[53] The remarks that follow are based on what little I could understand from the above-mentioned sources and from a cursory reading of the first part of the chapter on mu'amma in Shamsu'd-Din Faqir's *Hadá'iq-al-Balághat*.

Mu'amma is a word-puzzle in either prose or verse—in Sahba'i's case, exclusively in verse—in which verbal clues are included in accord with well-established rules and conventions, so that a reader can decipher it to discover the *ism* (name/noun) it simultaneously transmits and conceals. The basic premise underlying the rules is that every letter of the Persian alphabet has three forms. Its graphic or *maktúbí* form; its name, that is, its *malfúzí* form; and its numerical value in the *abjad* system, that is, its *'adadí* form. Then come numerous subtle ways to indicate in what form and where a particular letter occurs within a word—in the clues as well as in the solution. Additionally, there are innumerable conventions that may be used to beguile the reader—to challenge his curiosity while providing clues to the solution or, for that matter, solutions. To discover more 'names' [ism] than asked for by the puzzle-setter is a virtue, and raises the rank of the reader as a connoisseur.

Sahba'i's expertise in the art of mu'amma may be seen in his word-puzzles for two of the sacred names of God. They come from his book, *Javáhir-e Manzúm* (1835–6), and are in the form of quatrains. In each quatrain, the first two lines are not relevant to the solution, nor is the overall meaning of the quatrain. Only the final two lines set up the puzzle and provide the clues.

The Mu'amma for *Salám* (Peace)

Khúbán ki shikeb az dil-e nákám burand
az cashm-e to tarz-e ghamzahá vám burand
já'e ki rukh-e to hast zi mah ci sukhan
binumá rukh-e mah-vash ar zi mah nám burand

53 Sabir, 1982, pp. 333–5; Khan, 1965, pp. 639–43.

The beautiful ones who rob my heart of its patience
Have borrowed their wanton ways from your eyes.
How can anyone mention the moon to your face?
Reveal your moon-like face if someone says 'moon'.

Moon [*mah*] is mentioned three times. We take its first occurrence to mean 'month', for which another word is *sh[i]hr*. When the latter is turned into its '-like' [*misl*], we get s[i]hr—the letter *sín* being the regular '-like' for the letter *shín*—whose 'face' is *s*. The third occurrence of mah is to be taken as referring to the letter *lám* which in its full graphic shape, according to established conventions, stands for the moon—just as the full graphic form of the letter *'ain* is conventionally taken to stand for the sun. We take the name of the letter, i.e. *lám*, and add to it the already obtained *s*. And we get *s[a]lám*, one of the sacred names of God.[54]

The Mu'amma for *Haqq* (Truth)

Álam cu ba 'ishq-e án sitamgar áshuft
ú khvást ki jins-e dil az-ú gírad muft
cun dída-e khasm án tamám 'ayyáre
dar-há zi-miyán namúd va ákhir bi-nahuft

As the entire world suffered the pangs of her love,
She desired to take the hearts and give in return nothing.
The trickster set up, like an enemy's [two] eye[s],
Doors in the middle, and concealed the end.

The word for 'enemy' is *kh[a]sm*, whose 'eye', the middle letter, is *sád*, the 'like' of which is the letter *zád*, whose numerical value is 800. Convention allows us to treat the two zeros as its 'doors'—reading right to left they come first. The middle of the letter's name is the letter *alif*, which has the numerical value of 1. If the two zeros—the two 'doors'—are removed from their origin and added to the 'middle', that is, alif, that is, 1—we are left with two numbers: 8 and 100. As numerical values they stand for *h* and *q*, respectively,

54 This and the next explanation are loose versions of the solutions given with the puzzles in Sabir's and Khan's books, with some additions of my own for clarity. Note that short vowels are not graphically indicated in the alphabet and, therefore, have been placed within square brackets.

and together they form the word *h[a]q*, one of the sacred names of God.[55]

We next turn to Sahba'i's shurúh or commentaries on several Persian prose texts. The texts were staple readings for those who sought a career in formal or official writing of any kind. They were also a part of the Persian syllabus at the Delhi College for much of the time. In writing these commentaries Sahba'i, in effect, put down on paper a permanent record of what he must have ideally expected to tell his students in instructional sessions. His comments cover such topics as the etymology of a word, variable readings on the basis of vowels, variable readings on the basis of the use of an *izáfat*, morphological and syntactic issues, semantic variations, synonyms and antonyms, literary allusions, and rhetorical functions and attributes of a word or phrase. He explains arcane idioms, giving references to dictionaries, and supports his own contentions with exemplifying verses by Persian masters of the past. One is simply amazed at the range of the learning he brings to the task. His commentaries give us a powerful sense of what it meant to study literature at the time. Again two examples will have to suffice.

Sharh-e Shabnam-e Shádáb (1833–4)

Nothing except his name is known about Zahiru'd-Din Zahir, the author of *Shabnam-e Shádáb* ('The Refreshing Dew'), a short book in praise of the principal royal garden planted by Shah Abbas I near Isfahan around 1600. Presumably, it was written that year, as were other similar books.[56] While the original text ran to only 25 pages, Sahba'i's detailed commentary is 202 pages long.[57] It was Sahba'i's first such book, and was probably written during the year he was seeking a living in Mainpuri; the date of completion as given in a chronogram is 1249/1833–4. Sahba'i follows the general

55 The explanatory note in *Gulistán-e Sukhan* differs somewhat from that in *Ásáru's-Sanádíd*. The former reprints what Sahba'i had published, whereas Saiyid Ahmad Khan, in the latter, seems to have rewritten the explanation to make it more terse. The meaning of the last two lines is still not very clear to me.

56 Hamid, 1982, pp. 164–5.

57 Azad thought little of the book; he wrote, 'It merely praises one garden. There is the same old spring time of metaphors and similes. The blossoms of ideas are in full bloom. The air is full of color. But there is no fruit to be had. The brook of false imagination flows headlong, but no purpose is obtained', Azad, 1986, p. 84.

practice of first quoting a sentence or phrase from the original text, and then following it with his commentary. Our example covers just two sentences.

[Zahir] writes: *shákh az mastí-e tarab 'araq-cín-e shagúfa vázhún niháda.* (The flowerbranch, inebriated with pleasure, has put on the cap of the blossom upside down.)

[Sahba'i] comments: *'araq-cín*, with the Persian *jím* [i.e. the letter *cím*], is a kind of cap; it also refers to anything used to remove perspiration [*'araq*]—and so it is said in *Farhang-e Jahángírí* and *Burhán-e Qáti'*. And some say that it is a [skull] cap that is worn under a [regular] cap so that perspiration is absorbed by the former and no harm comes to the latter. You should know that in the state of extreme pleasure [*tarab*] people tilt their caps at an angle. Also, very often, they take the caps off, and toss them to the ground upside down. Here [the writer] has taken the shape of the blossom, since it faces upward, to be similar to a cap that is upside down. And the meaning of the phrase is clear enough.'

[Zahir] writes: *va nílofar kuláh-e sinjáb ba-huqqa-bázi-e habáb afganda.* (And the water-lily has cast down its ermine cap in its game with the bubbles.)

[Sahba'i] comments: *Nílofar* (water-lily)—with *nún, yá-e rasída, lám, váv-e majhúl, fá*, and *rá-e muhmala*—and *nílopar*—with *bá-e fársí*—and *nílopal*—with *ba-e fársi* and *lám* instead of *rá*—and *lílopar*—with *lám* instead of *nún*—and *nílfar*—without a *váv*—and *nílopark*—with an additional *káf*—are the names of a [single] well-known flower.

[Siraju'd-Din Ali] Khan-e 'Arzu writes that it is of two kinds. One is named *áftábí* (solar), since it opens in the morning when it sees the sun, and closes in the evening. It is called *kaval* in Hindi. And it too is of two kinds, one reddish inside and bluish outside, the other [entirely] white. The second kind of *nílofar* is called *qamarí* (lunar), since it remains closed during the day and opens only in the evening . And that is the one which is used in medicines. [Sahba'i' then gives examples for the different names by quoting verses from the following poets: Abu Shakur, Kamal Isma'il, Hakim Qatran, Siraju'd-Din Qamari, Husain Sana'i, and Mulla Nau'i Khamoshani. He could be quoting from 'Arzu's dictionary, *Siráju'l-Lughát*.]

And *sinjáb*, with the short vowel *i* after the first letter, is an animal from whose skin people make a garment. That the word is generally pronounced with the short vowel a after its first letter is only an error. In *Burhán*[*-e Qáti'*], it is given as the name of a blue garment which is well-known. One is permitted to [metrically] shorten the first syllable [in other words, pronounce it as open—i.e. ending in a nasalized vowel, instead of a closed syllable ending in a consonant]. [Sahba'i then quotes a verse by Nasir-e Khusrau, indicating that he was quoting from *Siráju'l-Lughát*.]

It should be clear that the association between *afgandan-e kuláh* (throwing of the cap) and *nílofar* (water-lily) is the same as [what we have in such expressions as] *naqqárcí-e ra'd* (the drum-beater of thunder) and *níza-báz-e mizhgán* (the dart-thrower of eyelashes), since [the flower] is itself the cap and also the subject of the verb 'to throw the cap.' And the upturning of the flower

should be likened to the casting down of a cap. In some manuscripts we find *bar havá afganda* (cast to the wind). [But] that is [said] with reference to a flower that grows high up on a branch and is far above the ground. Throwing the cap into the air must also [indicate] a joyous moment, and that meaning could be adduced from the fact that when people get done [with some work] they throw into the air whatever they might be holding in the hand and then grab it again. It's nothing but a habit.[58]

Sharh-e Míná Bázár (1849)

Our second example is from one of Sahba'i's later works, his commentary on *Míná Bázár*, a book now generally believed to have been written by Nur'd-Din Muhammad Zuhuri (d. 1615). No name or date is found in the book itself. The original text was not very long; Sahba'i's commentary includes the original and comes to only 128 printed pages. Apparently he had learnt to make his comments more selective. In the preface, Sahba'i states that the 'select' regard Zuhuri to be its author while 'common' people name X, Y, Z. The text, in his opinion, had not received any good commentary in the past, so he undertook the task as he was engaged in instructing his sons. His aim was 'primarily to aid his sons, and then to help those others too who wished to be educated but were forced to seek help here and there'.

Míná Bázár was a prescribed book at the Delhi College. Though widely read and admired at one time, it too is a curious text.[59] The title refers to a bazaar that the emperor Akbar, reportedly, used to organize exclusively for the ladies of the seraglio, in which all shops were kept by women.[60] The book does not so much describe

58 Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i, *Sharh-e Shabnam-e Shádáb-e Zahírá-e Tifrishi*, Lucknow, 1881, 2nd printing, pp. 122–3. My transliteration of the name of Zahir's city is purely conjectural.

59 This is what Azad thought of it: 'In *Míná Bázár*, the author has praised the cloth-seller, the vegetable-seller, the betel-leaf-seller and other such market people in separate chapters. He is the lone lover amidst so many beloveds The thinness and darkness of its ideas have thrown the market into a turmoil' (Azad, 1986, p. 84).

60 Abu'l-Fazl does not mention it, but 'Abdu'l-Qadir Badayuni, in *Muntakhabu'l-Tavárikh*, does. '...His Majesty ordered that the stalls of the fancy *bázárs*, which are held on New Year's day, should, for a stated time, be given up for the enjoyment of the Begums and the women of the Harem, and also for any other married ladies.' Quoted in Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami, *The A'in-e Akbari*, H. Blochmann (trans.), vol. 1, New Delhi, 1977 reprint, p. 213.

the market as praises the charms of the women of different trades who keep shops in it. The nine shopkeepers praised by the writer are: the jeweller [*jauharí*]; the cloth-merchant [*bazáz*]; the florist [*gul-farosh*]; the sweets-seller [*halwá'í*]; the perfumer [*'attár*]; the fruit-seller [*míwa-farosh*]; the tobacco-seller [*tanbákú-farosh*]; the betel-leaf-seller [*tañbolí*]; and the vegetable-seller [*sabzí-farosh*]. The detailed description of each shop and its owner, filled with conceits and word-plays, is couched in a language that exploits the vocabulary associated with that particular trade. Our first example is the second sentence of the main text; the second example comes from a later section.

Text:...*ki waqt-e garmíy-e bázár-e nashát ast wa bast-e bisát-e inbisát* (...that it is the time for the heating up of the market of exultation and the spreading out of the display of delight).

Commentary: *Bázár*, in origin, is *abá-zár*, and *abá* means 'soup' [*ásh*]. Thus, *bázár*, in fact, means 'the place [*zár*] with numerous shops of soup-makers [*áshpuzán*].' But metaphorically [*ba-majáz*], it has become so prevalent in the absolute sense of a place where buying and selling is done that we call a place *bázár* whether precious jewels are sold there or worthless bric-a-brac. The original meaning, as if, has completely been forgotten. *Garmíy-e bázár* (lit. heat of the market) is *raunaq-e bázár* (splendour of the market), just as *garmíy-e hangáma* is *raunaq-e hangáma* (splendour of the assembly or occasion). *Bast*, with the short vowel *a*, is *gastardan* (to expand; to spread). *Bisát*, with a short first vowel [*i*], is *gastardaní* (i.e. something to spread out), such as a piece of carpet or bedding—and so it is said in *Muntakhab*[*u'l-Lughát*]. The *káf* (i.e. *ki*), at the beginning of the first phrase [*fiqra*], is for the purpose of stating the good tidings [*muzhda*] that follow. And *bázár-e nashát* (market of exultation) and *bast-e bisát-e inbisát* (the spreading out of the display of delight) are expansions [*ifázát*], and tantamount [only] to expressing 'exultation' and 'delight.' The word ast, if it is [being used as] a non-attributive verb [*fi'l-e náqis*], should ordain some 'time' or 'occasion' to be its [subject] until its own [actual] subject [*ism-e án*] is established. The 'time' and 'occasion' is the Present time [*waqt-e maujúd*]. In other words, 'This time is the time for exultation, and this occasion is the occasion to spread out the display of delight.' [But] if [the verbal form *ast*] is [understood as] an attributive verb [*támma*], the aforementioned time and occasion become its subject, and one need not look for a predicate [*khabar*]. In other words, 'The time for exultation and delight has arrived.' And [in my opinion] ast is attributive [here]. [Sahba'i then quotes from Zuhuri, Sa'di, and Faizi to substantiate his reading, then refers the reader to a more detailed discussion in his commentary on the *Sih Nasr* of Zuhuri.]

Text: *hangám-e wurúd bar dukán-e tanbákú-farosh sar-e sar-kashí az sar báyad nihád va ba-wurúd-e ism-e yá-wadúd zubán-e niyáz báyad kushád tá az la'l-e rangín-e ú*

ki huqqa íst az mirján va az khál-e muhr-e 'anbarín bar án sadá-e marhabáe ba-gosh áyad wa khú-e átishín ki khirman-e sabr-e be-bargán sokhta wa dúd az-án bar-ávurda wa nazar bar án na dokhta bar sar-e iltifát ámda ba-yár-e damsáz ya'ní huqqa-e tanbákú ham azú hamdam wa nadím wa mihram farmáyad (Arriving at the shop of the tobacco-seller, one should remove vanity from one's head and loosen the tongue of humility by repeating, 'Ya Wadud', so that one's ears may receive from her colorful ruby [lips]—a device made of coral—and from the mole thereon—a seal made of amber—the exclamation, 'Welcome!' So that her fiery nature that set fire to the harvest of forbearance of those who possessed nothing, and sent it all up in smoke but showed no concern, may turn to being kind, and make you a friend, companion and intimate of her own confidant—the tobacco hookah.)

Commentary: *Tanbákú* is the well-known leaf, and in common parlance it is also used for what is made by mixing that leaf with molasses [*qand*] and then smoked. It is a case of metonymy [*tasmiyat-al-kul bi-esm-al-khabar*], since that leaf is its dominant constituent. The author of *Bahár-e 'Ajam*, quoting from *Ma'ásir-e Rahími*, writes, 'Tobacco came from the Firang to the Deccan, and spread from there during the time of Emperor Akbar.' According to the *Dárá Shikohí*, it reached North India [*hind*] in 914 AH [*nuh-sad wa cahár-dih hijrí*] at the end/summit [*intihá*] of the reign of the Emperor Akbar.'[61] *Yá Wadúd* (The Loving One!) is one of the names of the Almighty; exorcists and necromancers frequently chant it to cause an increase in the feeling of love [in someone]. *Zubán-e niyáz* (the tongue of humility), i.e. *zubán ba-sabab-e niyáz* (the tongue with humility). The *tá* is to add causality to what precedes it. *Marhabá*, in fact, means a wide space, as per *Kashf[u'l-Lughát]*. And in common usage, it is spoken at the time when something happens/is brought forth pleasingly or gently [*ba khushí wa narmí*]—and so it is in *Bahár-e 'Ajam*. *Be-barg* means being 'without any means' [*besámán*]. *Dúd bar-ávurdan* (lit. to bring out smoke) means 'to kill'; it is of the same nature as the expression, *gard bar-ávurdan* (lit. to bring out dust). It is a transitive verb; its intransitive form in *dúd bar-khástan*. [A verse by Amir Khusrau.] *Nazar bar cíze dokhtan* (lit. to sew one's glance to something) means 'to look at something.' And the word, *dokhtan* (to sew), implies the kind of seeing in which one's glance remains fixed somewhere. Thus, *nazar ba-zamín dokhtan* means 'to look fixedly at the ground while feeling ashamed,' because when one feels ashamed one looks at the ground and is unable to lift up the eyes. [A verse by Mirza Quli Meli.]...*Huqqa* is a thing made of brass or copper or some other [metal] which is filled with water and on whose top are stuck a hollow reed [*nai*] and a *cilam* (the clay cup containing tobacco and hot coals). It is used in smoking tobacco. It can also be called *huqqa-e tañbákú*, [as here]. As stated in *Muntakhab[u'l-Lughát]*, *nadím* is one who sits in the company of elders, but it implies just any companion

61 Unless there are gross errors in the printed text, this statement makes gravely doubtful Sahba'i's knowledge of history. Akbar ascended the throne in 963/1556.

[*ham-nishín*]. In the dictionaries, *mahram* means 'one who is allowed into the haram'—as it says in *Muntakhab*[*u'l-Lughát*]. In common usage it means someone familiar and well-known, as in such expressions as *mahram-e ráz* (confidant) and *mahram-e asrár* (confidant). What the quoted text means is this: When a man arrives at the tobacco-seller's shop, he must do two things. One, he must remove from his mind any trace of arrogance; in other words, he must adopt humility and self-effacement. Two, he should start repeating the name [of God], *'Ya Wadud,'* abjectly. So that, with the help of the two actions, there may come to his ears the sound of 'Welcome' [*marhabá*] from the hued lips of the [tobacco-seller] which are in their red coloring like a carved piece of coral [*huqqa-e mirján*]—and placed on [the lip] is a mole like an amber seal. In other words, the tobacco-seller gets happy at the arrival of the man and says to him 'Welcome!' And the tobacco-seller's fiery nature, which set fire to and destroyed with its heat and intensity the accumulated patience of her lovers, while not even bothering to see who or what was burned, changes and becomes attentive and kind. So that [the tobacco-seller] makes that [newcomer] a confidant, companion, friend and intimate of her own friend and confidant, namely the tobacco hookah. Since her nature is so rebellious and neglectful, mere humility and self-effacement will not be of any use to the man; but spells and incantations [*'azímat*], joining hands with his abject submission, can turn her away from the path of disdain [*istighná*] and bring her around to being attentive and caring.[62]

Several of Sahba'i's books deal with issues related to rhetoric and lexicography. Most of them remained unavailable to me. Except for one, *Qaul-e Faisal* ('The Decisive Word'), which is a significant contribution to a literary/linguistic controversy that arose in Delhi in the first half of the eighteenth century and kept many prominent literati of north India engaged in heated debate for the next several decades. The issue at hand was highly charged. Can an Indian writer, by reason of his studies and his individual talent, have the same linguistic command and authority in Persian that an Iranian writer would naturally have by reason of his birth and residence in Iran? It began with Siraju'd-Din 'Ali Khan 'Arzu (1687?–1756), a remarkable polymath whose influence on Urdu and Persian poets and writers of his time cannot be overestimated.[63] He wrote a critique of the poetry of Shaikh 'Ali Hazin (1692–1766), who had found faults with Indian poets of Persian and had asserted the inherent superiority of an Iranian over any Indian in all matters

62 Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i, *Sharh-e Mínú Bázár*, Kanpur, 1904, 3rd printing, pp. 4, 105–6.

63 Jamil Jalibi, *Tarikh-e Adab-e Urdú*, vol. 2, part 1, Delhi, 1984, pp. 148–64.

concerning Persian.[64] Though Hazin did not respond to 'Arzu's critique entitled *Tanbíhu'l-Gháfilín* ('A Warning to the Neglectful'), several prominent Indian writers, including two important lexicographers, took up Hazin's defence. Closer to Sahba'i's time, Shaikh Muhammad Muhsin, a grand-nephew of 'Arzu and the son of the poet Mir's step-brother, had written a book entitled *Muhákamatu'sh-Shu'ará* ('The Judging of Poets'). In it he claimed to be presenting a 'balanced' view but, in fact, wrote an apologetics on 'Arzu's behalf. Sahba'i could have written his 'Decisive Word' directly in response to Mohsin's 'Judgment.' He began working on the book in 1851, but we don't know when it was finished. It was published only posthumously through the efforts of Pandit Dharm Narain, who writes in a note at the end of the book:

In the days when I was taking lessons with him, the *Ustad* [i.e. Sahba'i] would sometimes stop, ponder over something, and then make a note in his notebook. When I asked him about it, he said, 'I am writing a rejoinder to *Tanbíhu'l-Gháfilín*. If something relevant comes to mind I jot it down.' Then the *Ustad* and his sons died. I, however, remained curious about the book, and eventually found that Pandit Ajodhya Parshad Mubtala of Gwalior possessed the manuscript. I then sought the help and advice of Maulawi Muhammad Husain Hijr of Indore and Pandit Har Narain of Jaorah and published the book.[65]

Like Muhsin, Sahba'i too claims that he was writing a 'balanced' book. He begins by referring to both Hazin and 'Arzu in equally respectful terms, then writes:

There are two groups of people. One believes in using even the dust of Iran as the collyrium for their eyes. The other says, How can an Indian who has never been out of India have any say in the Persian language? The same people know full well that Iranians, despite living for years in India, never manage to converse in Urdu properly. Someone then asked me, Why don't you say something? I owe much to both my elders. Also, I feared that I would be attacked by both sides—the way the supporters of 'Umar are attacked by the Shi'ahs and the Kharijis alike. Nevertheless, I undertook the task.'[66]

64 S. Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A Socio-intellectual History of the Isná 'Asharí Shi'is in India*, vol. II, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 107–17. Born in Isfahan, Hazin came to India as a political refugee in 1734. He was in hiding in Delhi when Nadir Shah plundered the city in 1739. Subsequently, Hazin moved to Benaras, where he lived till his death.

65 Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i, *Qaul-e-Faisal*, Kanpur, Nizami Press, 1862. Regrettably, I neglected to note the page numbers for this quotation and the next. Later editions do not seem to have Narain's note.

66 Sahba'i, 1862. See fn. 64 above.

One might assume from the above that Sahba'i was taking the side of those who felt that not being an Iranian, or not even going to Iran for a prolonged stay, did not disqualify one from achieving a command of Persian. In other words, he would turn out to be a partisan of 'Arzu. But that is not quite the case. Even when he notes some error in a verse by Hazin, he finds 'Arzu's comment on it not quite right. Like other books of this type, *Qaul-e Faisal* is a mine of valuable lexical and rhetorical information. It is also a window through which we can discover how an educated and refined person of Sahba'i's time went about reading poetry, and what he found exceptional, pleasing, or questionable in a verse.

From *Qaul-e Faisal*

[Hazin's verse]: *az ján guzashtagán ba jahán náz míkunand//'ushsháq-e khasta rá ba masíhá ci ihtiyáj* (Those who transcend their lives live on proudly in this world. The infirm lovers do not need the Messiah.)

['Arzu's critique]: As a taste for understanding poetry would tell us, there is not a very good link between the two lines. In the opinion of this humble person, the following line would be better than the Shaikh's: *tá la'l-e rúh-bakhsh-e to dárad salá'-e 'am* (So long as your soul-giving-ruby [i.e. lips] is openly inviting and challenging...).

[Sahba'i's comment]: The gist of the verse is that 'those who have transcended their lives' do not worry about finding a cure for their pain; they do not go to the doors of the physicians to beg for medicine and suffer their whims. Consequently, they live with pride. In other words, they live an admirable life. The same is true of the 'infirm lovers.' Ergo, why should the latter feel any need for the Messiah [to bring them back to life]? As that is the case, the link between the two lines is evident to all understanding persons. I do not know what link Khan-e 'Arzu was looking for. As for the line that he provides, the common people would consider it better than the original because it contains some word-associations [*munásibát-e lafzí*]. But in truth, the content of Hazin's line is more elevated. Further, the *tá* that ['Arzu] has at the beginning of his line misleadingly implies that the lovers had felt a need for the Messiah before the beloved's lips proclaimed their challenging invitation. Also, *salá'* is commonly used with the verb *dádan*; its use with *dáshtan* has not been heard of.

[Hazin's verse]: *ravá-st lála agar kása dásht pesh-e kafam//gule-st dágh ki makhsús-e gulsitán-e manast* (It is only proper that the tulip holds out a bowl before me//[for] the scar [on my heart] is a flower that is exclusive to my garden).

['Arzu's critique]: It is evident to anyone who knows well the ways of poetry that 'holding a bowl out' in order to 'beg for a flower' is not appropriate

[*na-munásib*]; what would be 'appropriate' here is gold or some other valuable thing or some item of food—as is the case with the beggars who come asking. It would have been a little more appropriate if he had written, *zare-st dágh-e muhabbat ki dar dukán-e manast* ([for] the scar of love is the gold that is exclusive to my shop), since gold does fall into some begging bowl every once in a while.[67]

[Sahba'i's comment]: Hazin has mentioned 'bowl' in the context of begging. The objector, therefore, is right. Though it is an act of begging, it is only for a flower. And that does not require a bowl.[68] As for [his] thinking that the 'begging for a flower' should be deemed the same as the 'begging for other things,' that is a result of misconception [*natá'ij-e wahm*]. After all, every theme or idea also needs an interpretation [*ákhir ma'ní rá ta'bír ham darkár ast*].

[Hazin's verse]: *somnát-e muhabbat-e to buvad//fárigh az rasm-e mahfil-árá'í* (The Somnath of your love [i.e. the temple in which your love is the deity]//is freed of the convention of welcoming others). [The verse comes from a poem in praise of 'Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad.]

['Arzu's critique]: One who has a sense of propriety knows that to refer to one's love for Murtaza 'Ali, on whom be many praises, as a Somnath is highly improper. Even if the poet has expressed his love in the fashion of a lover, and even if he also has some other verses appropriate to this reference to Somnath. Such words are allowed in the context of *tauhíd* (the Unity of God), but [poems] praising the Prophet [*na't*] and [poems] praising the Imams [*manqabat*] are a different matter. Using such words in them is extremely rude and presumptuous. 'Be inebriated with God, but be fully alert with the Prophet' [*bá khudá mastí kun o bá mustafá hushyár básh*].

[Sahba'i's comment]: Though it is not devoid of impropriety, [the poet's statement] should not be censored so much. A man crazy with love cannot be bound to conventions.[69]

An astute scholar of Persian literature recently wrote that as a poet in Persian Sahba'i, in his time, was second only to Ghalib.[70] The evaluation is correct. But we must bear in mind that both Sahba'i and Azurda—the other poet who could remotely be brought

67 Hazin had exploited the association between the tulip, with its dark centre, and the poet's heart with its scar of love. 'Arzu exploited a different set of associations: *zar* literally means gold, but it can also mean money or coins; it also means the yellow pollen found in most flowers.

68 Presumably, poetic convention would allow for that purpose only one's extended palms or the held out hem of a garment.

69 Sahba'i, 1862, pp. 28, 29, 81.

70 Waris Kirmani, *Dreams Forgotten*, Aligarh, 1986, p. 401.

into the comparison—were rank 'amateurs' compared to Ghalib. They wrote many good verses, but in both quantity and quality their poetry does not carry the same heft as Ghalib's. Sahba'i' poetic output, as published in his díwán, is meagre—61 ghazals, six short *qasídas*, 12 quatrains, and a few other things. It remains insubstantial even if we add, as Hamid does, the short occasional poems Sahba'i wrote for some of his other books.[71] Ghalib and Sahba'i were both fascinated by Bedil and Zuhuri and sought hard to imitate them in both prose and poetry, Ghalib, however, early transcended them in poetry while remaining fairly in thrall to their ornate style in his prose. Sahba'i, on the other hand, was steadfast in his admiration and imitation of the two in both prose and poetry all his life. This impressionistic conclusion will certainly be hard to prove decisively, one way or the other. One thing is certain. In our time, one cannot discuss Sahba'i as a poet without bringing in a comparison with Ghalib. There are 19 ghazals in Sahba'i's díwán that share their *zamín*—the rhyme scheme—with a similar number of Ghalib's ghazals. The two sets were most likely written for the same musha'iras in Delhi. For our limited purpose here, these may be taken as exemplifying their art, as they were pitting their talents not only against each other and their contemporaries but also, in each case, against some former master who originated the zamín. A traditional critical device in such cases of paired ghazals has been to compare the individual couplets that share a rhyme [*qáfiya*]. We briefly do the same here to get some sense of Sahba'i as a ghazal writer. The very first ghazal in Sahba'i's díwán forms such a pair with a ghazal of Ghalib's that is dated by Wazirl-Hasan 'Abidi to 1837 or earlier.[72] Its *radíf* or the unchanging end-rhyme is *-e-má* (our; our's), while the qáfiya or the changing rhyming words are *díwána, parvána, dána,* and so forth. The line set as the *tarh* (pattern, i.e. metre and rhyme) for the musha'ira where Sahba'i and Ghalib presented their ghazals was most likely from the ghazal by Zuhuri in that zamín.[73]

71 Hamid, 1982, p. 205. A number of Sahba'i's ghazals, however, were apparently not available to the editors of the *Kulliyát*; the selection in *Gulistán-e Sukhan* contains verses from five ghazals that are not in the díwán, Sabir, 1982, pp. 328–9.

72 Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib, *Ghazaliyát-e Fársí*, Saiyid Waziru'l-Hasan 'Abidi (ed.), Lahore, Punjab University, 1969, pp. 55–6.

73 Mirza Ja'far Husain, *Matá'-e Ghálib*, Aligarh, Aligarh Muslim University, 1969, p. 154.

Here is what the two poets came up to accommodate with the phrase *dána-e má* (our grain).

Sahba'i: Like the spark whatever we possess is pledged to annihilation;
Lightning sprouts along with the plant from our grain.[74]

Ghalib 1: Hair may grow out of a farmer's palm, but
Impossible that a plant sprout from our grain.[75]

We see that both Ghalib and Sahba'i take off from the rhyme in almost the same direction, using paradox and hyperbole as the rhetorical devices of choice. 'Grain', for most people, will immediately suggest nourishment, nurture, and growth. The two poets, however, seek to surprise us by invoking the opposite values, anchoring causality in their conventionally sanctioned doomed state of life, and also in human mortality. Further, they declare that our life contains within it the seeds of its destruction. Sahba'i brings together *sharar* (spark) and *barq* (lightning); both are classical similes for the fleeting nature of human life. Ghalib has *dihqán* (farmer) to go with *rísha* (tendril; fibre) and *dána* (grain), but it does not add anything to the main statement he makes—hair, after all, does not grow on any palm. On the other hand, when Ghalib uses the same theme in Urdu some sixteen years later he greatly improves on Sahba'i's couplet. Sahba'i simply states what he feels is the case; Ghalib goes a step further and makes what he feels poetically more convincing to us.

Whatever I construct contains a manner of its ruination;
The farmer's heated blood colors the lightning on his harvest.[76]

Now the second line has a logic—farmer's toil/heated blood/lightning that sets fire to the toiled over harvest—and makes us feel as a palpable truth what was merely a statement in the first line.

A second pair of comparable couplets comes from the rhyme *káshána* (nest; cottage).

74 *cuñ sharar hásil-e má dar girav-e dast-e faná-st//barq bá rísha kunad sar-badar-az dána-e má.*

75 *mú bar áyad zi kaf-e dast agar dihqán rá//níst mumkin ki kashad rísha sar az dána-e má.*

76 *merí ta'mír meñ muzmar hai ik súrat kharábí kí//hayúla barq-e khirman ká hai khún-e garm dihqáñ ká. Hayúla* is from a Greek word; it means: the First Principle; the outline or sketch from which a painting develops.

Sahba'i: The existence of the People of Mortality is uniquely fleeting;
Its own paling color becomes the light in our cottage.[77]

Ghalib: It is famously constricted; just come and see
Our cottage sink under the impact of an ant.[78]

Hyperbole is used by both, but Sahba'i seeks a serious tone while Ghalib is openly playful. Sahba'i also shows more craftsmanship when he sets up a number of associations: existence/mortality; fleeting of life/going of colour; pallor/yellow light. Another set of interesting pairs for comparison are found in their ghazals with the radíf:...*námídamash* (I named it...).[79] Their opening verses [*matla'*] are:

Sahba'i: My cry's smoke covered me like a parasol, I named it the Sky.
A corner of my heart stretched for space, I called it the World.[80]

Ghalib: The smoke of madness wove a veil, I named it the Sky.
The eye opened to a crazy dream, which I named the World.[81]

The two exploit the same associations, almost. A cry can be 'burning', so it has 'smoke' too (Sahba'i). Madness arises from too much bile, and bile is black like smoke (Ghalib). For both the heavens and the earth (the macrocosm) are worth little compared to the human (the microcosm).[82] Sahba'i's ghazal has nine verses, of which at least two more are excellent; Ghalib's ghazal consists of 15 verses, of which at least five more are memorable. In their signature verses [*maqta'*], the two reveal their views of themselves interestingly.

77 *hastiy-e ahl-e faná vaqf-e shitáb-e digar ast//raftan-e rang buvad sham' ba-káshána-e má.*

78 *tangiy-ash nám bar-ávurda tamásha dárad//dar pay-e múr firú-raftan-e káshána-e má.*

79 That is, I changed X's name to Y out of fear, delusion, hope, vanity, helplessness, negligence, error, or some other human feeling or failing.

80 *dúd-e áham sáybáñ gasht ásmáñ námídamash//gosha-e dil dam zi vus'at zad jaháñ námídamash.*

81 *dúd-e saudáy tutuq bast ásmáñ námídamash//dída bar xváb-e parisháñ zad jaháñ námídamash.*

82 Sahba'i impressively uses the image of 'smoke' one more time in the same ghazal: *dúd-e saudá jam' shud candánki tan námash futád//zán miyán sar-zad sharár-e vahm ján námídamash.* (The smoke of bile congealed, I named it Body. In it appeared a spark of conjecture, I named it Life.)

Sahba'i: Sahba'i's inebriated pen contained [many more] bewitching songs;
I acted drunkenly when I called him [only] 'eloquent-tongued.'[83]

Ghalib: Ghalib was a nightingale of the garden of Persia;
I was negligent and called him an Indian parakeet.[84]

It should appear from the above that in the ghazal the best of Sahba'i could be as interesting as Ghalib's. In the other important genre, the panegyric [qasída], only two out of his six—for Saiyid Ahmad Khan and Azurda—are worthy of any note. The rest are workmanlike. Sahba'i works hard enough, but his best in the genre does not reach the same heights as Ghalib's. How could it, when Ghalib wrote ten times as many panegyrics as Sahba'i? As for the few quatrains [*rubá'í*] that Sahba'i wrote, one need only mention that, besides celebrating the Muslim 'Ids, he also wrote on Basant, Holi, and Raksha Bandhan, suggesting his closeness to his many Hindu students.

Sahba'i's three Urdu books were command performances; he undertook them at the behest of Felix Boutros, the principal of the Delhi College from 1841 to 1845. The books were: *Tarjuma-e Hadá'iq-al-Balághat* (1842); *Intikháb-e Davávín* (1844); and *Qavá'id-e Sarf va Nahv-e Urdú* (1849).[85]

Urdu and 'Nagri' were taught—as regular subjects—to the students at the college. Sabir mentions a certain Mir Saiyid Muhammad Ghafil who had long taught Nasta'liq calligraphy to students at the college, and was also responsible for the instruction of Urdu language and Nagri [*zubán-e urdú aur nágarí*]. 'He also compiled a book, *Miftáhal- Lughát*, to explain Nagari words, and translated *Lílávatí*, a book on Arithmetic, into Urdu.'[86] It appears to me that Boutros wished to put into effect a new syllabus for the Urdu courses at the college. And so he asked Sahba'i, rather than the people actually teaching in the classes, to prepare the books he felt were necessary for formally teaching Urdu language and literature to those who already spoke the language. These, to his mind,

83 *kháma-e sahbá'iy-e sar-gashta rangíñ naghma dásht//man zi mastí bulbul-e shíva-zubáñ námídamash.*

84 *búd ghálib 'andalíbe az gulistán-e 'ajam//man zi ghaflat_ tútiy-e hindostáñ námídamash.*

85 According to Alavi, Sahba'i also edited the Urdu díwán of Khwaja Mir Dard 'for the Delhi College', Sahba'i, 1987, p. 14. No further details are available.

86 Sabir, 1982, pp. 373–4.

were: a grammar book; a selection of exemplary literature, poetry of course; and a manual of rhetoric. It was a bold new step in the history of Urdu.

Hadá'iq-al-Balághat ('The Gardens of Eloquence') is a well-known book on rhetoric written by Mir Shamsu'd-Din Faqir (1753–1803), a prolific writer and poet of the eighteenth century.[87] Its usefulness was recognized early and led to its rapid popularity all over India. Even the Fort William College brought out an edition in 1814. Its title page carried the following legend:

> The bowers of eloquence: being a treatise on the rhetoric, poetry, and rhyme of the Persians; by Meer Shums-ood-Deen Fukeer, of Dehlee. Corrected for the press and published under the patronage of the College of Fort William by Mouluvees Jan Alee and Abdoor Ruheem. Calcutta: Printed at the Press of Mouluvee Shookr-Oolah. 1814.[88]

Boutros had likely studied the book himself at Calcutta; impressed by its conciseness and usefulness, he decided to have it translated into Urdu for the benefit of his students. He could not have chosen a better book, nor a better translator. The translation was officially done under the auspices of the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society. Here is how Sahba'i described the task he was given and the way he accomplished it.

> Mr Boutros...said to me that if this book were translated from the Persian into Urdu, and if its Arabic and Persian examples were replaced with Urdu verses of the 'language-knowers of [north] India' [*zubándán-e hind*], [the result] would be something useful for the people who have a taste for Urdu verse but lack the skills to obtain from Persian books these elevated ideas. So I obeyed his command despite being not fit for the job, and prepared this book in 1258/1844. Learned and just men, when they read it, will discover what labour I have put into discussing the scholarly issues and in supplying Urdu examples. Since the desired aim was to provide full benefit to the students, I have added many new matters. I have not restricted myself to a literal translation either, since that would not have led to a clear explaining of the subject matter.[89]

87 Hamid, 1982, p. 186.

88 I have not seen the book. Having located it through a World Catalogue search at the University of Cambridge, I checked also with the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Miss Emma Blake of the same very kindly sent me the correct details of the title page. The book, apparently, contains no introduction or notes by the editors.

89 Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i, *Tarjuma-e Hadá'iq-al-Balághat*, Lucknow, n.d., pp. 2–3. (Free translation of Sahba'i's ornate language.)

All scholars agree that Sahba'i did a remarkable job. His Urdu explanations are not only lucid, they are more detailed and better organized than the Persian original. At the same time he leaves out things if he feels they might overburden his reader. And he provides ample examples from the poetry of Urdu masters, explaining the verses for the benefit of the reader and readily composing a verse of his own if he could not find an apt example elsewhere. These qualities have kept the book in print since its first appearance. It is, therefore, the more regrettable that Boutros did not allow Sahba'i to translate the book's fifth chapter that dealt with the art of mu'amma, an art that Sahba'i cherished and excelled in.[90]

Intikháb-e Davávín, the second book that Boutros had Sahba'i prepare for the college, was an innovation in Urdu—an anthology for pedagogical purpose. It contained selections from different poets, but did not truly represent a single person's taste in poetry, as did a traditional *bayáz* (a personal notebook). It had a chronological order, like a history of literature, and, like a traditional tazkira, short notes on the poets. Further, like any pedagogical anthology of today, it had brief notes on the various genres of Urdu poetry. The title page contained the following in English:[91]

Selection from the Most Celebrated Hindoustany Poets
viz
Wali, Dard, Sauda, Meer Takee, Joorut, Meer Hassun, Nasseer, Mumnoon
Nasiek, Moolchand, Zouk, Moumeen Khan
with
A few Popular Songs
and
An Introduction on the
Different Kinds of Hindee Verse
by
Moonshee Imam bux of the Dehli College

90 'The art [of mu'amma], to intelligent minds, is the subtlest of all arts and the most enjoyable, but because of its difficulty most people of today do not fancy it. And so the honorable Mr Boutros declared that this art should be renounced. And since he who is commanded must obey, I have left out the chapter.' Ibid, p. 157.

91 Imam Bakhsh Sahba'i, *Intikháb-e Davávín*, Tanvir Ahmad 'Alavi (ed.), Delhi, 1987, p. 23; corrected with the original on microfilm, SAMP #16645.

The Urdu underneath was a literal translation of the above, but did not list the poets.[92] We would be right to conclude that the book's organization and design were suggested by Boutros, and also what it included or excluded. The first volume of Garcin de Tassy's *Histoire de la Littérature Hindouie et Hindoustani* (1839) had already appeared. Boutros must have had a copy, since he had provided many books and newspapers to de Tassy.[93] Boutros, in my view, wished to put in the hands of his students something that was simultaneously selective and comprehensive, while remaining always within the limits of his own preferences. That is why the book was eventually a failure. It went through several printings at the time as a textbook, then completely disappeared.

The failure of the book lies in both what it includes and what it leaves out.[94] It contains ghazals by Wali, Dard, Sauda, Mir, Jur'at, Shah Nasir, Mamnun, Nasikh, Zauq, and Momin, but leaves out Mushafi, Atish, and Ghalib. It has selections from two *masnavis*—Mir Hasan's *Sihr-al-Bayán*, and Mul Chand Munshi's *Khusraván-e 'Ajam*—but relegates Mir's masnavis to a brief excerpt in the introduction. The 'selection' portion of the book is limited to only two genres. Other genres get mentioned only in the introduction, where examples are given but in an idiosyncratic manner. Instead of Sauda and Zauq, the two writers who best exemplify qasída in Urdu, we get a tepid excerpt from Momin. And even the latter runs to only one page, while a minor genre like *vásokht* (a bitter and vengeful love poem) gets four pages. Most noticeably, two significant genres, *marsiya* (elegy) and *shihr-áshob* (a kind of social satire), are entirely left out. The introduction is quite deficient. Similar are the very brief notes on the poets. They hardly provide any biographical information, and are derived from just one or two tazkiras. Even Sahba'i's contemporaries are not treated any better. For example, the note on Zauq:

92 The Urdu title began: *Intikháb Díwánoñ Shu'ará-e Mashhúr-e Zubán-e Urdú Ká Aur Ba'z Gít Ká....* The new more formal title was probably given by the translator of de Tassy's lecture. See Garcin de Tassy, *Khutbát-e Gársáñ Ditásí*, Aurangabad, Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, 1935, pp. 94–5. Karimu'd-Din, too used the phrase to describe the book, Karimu'd-Din, 1983, p. 3.

93 And also F. Fallon, whose Urdu translation of the book, done in collaboration with Karimu'd-Din eventually became the latter's *Tabaqát-e Shu'ará-e Hind* (1848).

94 A useful essay by Zahiru'd-Din Siddiqi, included in 'Alavi's edition, discusses these matters at some length, but speculates quite mistakenly that the faults came in because the book was meant for European students.

Zauq is his *takhallus*; Shaikh Muhammad Ibrahim, the name; Delhi, his home; and *Kháqání-e Hind*, his title. For 30 years he has been in the service of the present king of Delhi, beginning from the days when the latter was only a prince. [Zauq] has been busy in the art of poetry since childhood. Presently in Delhi there is none to match him. In most *musha'iras*, faced with his fiery verse, other poets burn like dry twigs. When he recites his ghazal in a *musha'ira*, they feel envious and, ashamed of themselves, rub their hands in dismay. And so I write these verses, which were in a notebook [*bayáz*], that they may remain as a memento of him.[95]

What, of course, is very interesting is the reference to jealous poets. A trite general statement that could also be read as something specific. Did the students in Delhi in the 1840s also understand it to refer to Ghalib as we readily do now? It seems likely, particularly when they also found that Ghalib was totally excluded from the book. There is not a single line by Ghalib anywhere in it.

Was Ghalib's exclusion due to Sahba'i alone, or did Boutros have a hand in it too? Like Hamid, I suspect Boutros more. Not because I think Sahba'i whole-heartedly admired Ghalib, but because he could not have expected to get away with excluding Ghalib. He was much too dependent on Azurda and Fazl-e Haqq who were admirers and friends of Ghalib. Most probably, Ghalib was excised by Boutros. He may not have liked Ghalib's verse, or perhaps he objected to the inclusion of a poet who, only a couple of years earlier, was caught running a gambling den and fined. Boutros's heavy hand also explains the inclusion of Mul Chand, a deservedly forgotten poet, whose versified version of only a part of the *Sháhnáma* could have appeared 'epical' to Boutros.[96] I also suspect Boutros of playing some detrimental role in shaping the introduction too. Left to himself, Sahba'i would have written something similar to what appears under Sabir's name in the introduction to *Gulistán-e Sukhan*. Probably he did exactly that, but was then forced by Boutros to shorten it most drastically.[97] Perhaps

95 Sahba'i, 1987, p. 322.

96 Hamid, 1982, p. 190. On Mul Chand, see Sabir, 1982, p. 435, and de Tassy, 1935, p. 174.

97 One example of poor editing: In the note on the *rubá'í* (quatrain), Sahba'i refers to his translation of *Hadá'iq-al-Balághat* then promises to give examples as he discusses various metres. But there is no separate discussion of metres in the book, and the four examples of quatrains are all in one place isolated from the description, Sahba'i, 1987, pp. 56, 64.

Boutros picked up the scissors himself. He, after all, wanted only a school book. And of a new kind too, free of legends and literary and religious speculations that abound in the 78-page-long 'introduction' in *Gulistán-e Sukhan*.

Most intriguing to me is the inclusion of what the book refers to in Urdu as *gít* and what the English on the title page calls 'popular songs'. That, I believe, was Boutros's attempt to distinguish between the 'literary' and the 'popular' in accord with his own views. The distinction did not exist then in Urdu. The motley group consists of nine Urdu ghazals by Jur'at, one Persian ghazal popularly and wrongly ascribed to Hafiz, one Urdu ghazal by Saba, one *khiyál* in what Sahba'i would have called *'bhasha'*, one *tappa* in Punjabi, and one *thumrí* in 'bhasha'. It is hard to imagine Sahba'i adding them to what was in effect the first step toward the formation of a 'canon' for Urdu poetry. One also wonders how they were taught, and what the students thought of them. Amazingly, their number increased as the book was reprinted.[98]

I could not gain access to the third book, *Qavá'id-e Sarf va Nahv-e Urdú*,[99] and therefore can only report what Hamid tells us. According to him, the book contains an introduction (on the history of the Urdu language), and a chapter each on *sarf* (morphology), *nahv* (syntax), *lughat* (lexicon), and *amsál* (proverbs). Most interestingly, it contains a section that introduces rules and signs of punctuations in Urdu. (That itself should make the book worthy of a reprint.) According to Hamid, the only failing of the book is that it does not treat Urdu on its own terms, but instead employs the concepts of Persian and Arabic grammars to explain Urdu's structure and rules.[100]

Sahba'i met a brutal death when he was only 55. During the preceding years of his adult life he had taught countless students, and mentored many. Quite a few of them remembered him later with admiration and gratitude. Though his peers were some of the most talented and learned men of the time, he had

98 Besides the text edited by Alavi, I was able to examine two microfilmed copies of the book, one of which was a reprint dated 1844 but included two more *gít*, both titled *gít malár* (SAMP #16644 and 16645).

99 The book was ordered by Boutros and was perhaps even ready before he left Delhi in 1845. It was published only four years later, after Sprenger's departure.

100 Hamid, 1982, pp. 193–6.

succeeded in gaining recognition of his own worth from all of them. He had written little poetry, but it had earned him praise even from a grudging Ghalib. And, finally, he had written copiously in prose on a variety of subjects. In other words, he had lived a rich and fruitful life despite the hardships he had to face in other ways.

Some of his writings rightly deserve our renewed attention. His encyclopaedic commentaries, for example, will be a godsend to anyone writing a 'handbook' for pre-modern Urdu literature. Though his word-puzzles will now please only a rare *aficionado*, his translation of *Hadá'iq-al-Balághat* will always be appreciated by Urdu readers. Even his little collection of ghazals will reward the attention of any serious student of Ghalib's Persian poetry. At the same time, however, I cannot help seeing him as a somewhat anachronistic presence in his own time. For two reasons.

Sahba'i's writings show no traces of the new learning that was radically transforming the thinking of many of his students at Delhi College. There is nothing to suggest that he was acquainted with the science and history books that were being published so assiduously by the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society. Nor is there any evidence in Sahba'i's life or his writings of any kind of interaction with 'Master' Ram Chandra, arguably the most charismatic of his colleagues at the college, and his two influential journals. It is as if Sahba'i had quite adamantly turned his back on everything that was offered by what is now called the 'Delhi Renaissance', a phenomenon to whose making his own institution and colleagues had contributed enormously.

Sahba'i also stands out among his peers and elders for not writing any verse in Urdu, and for not publishing any Urdu prose in his own name. Instead, he sought to make his name in Persian alone. But Persian, as pointed out earlier, was on its way out. With Urdu steadily gaining at its cost, Persian's literary-cultural importance for the Indo-Muslim elite society of north India had been on the decline for almost a hundred years. And its great attraction as the 'job' language ended for good in 1830, when the new rulers declared English and the 'vernaculars' as the languages of administration. By so severely limiting himself to Persian, Sahba'i made himself and his writings more marginal—in his own time and in ours—than would have been the case if, like Ghalib, he had taken up Urdu in equal earnest.

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Section 3

Pupils

6

The Perils of Cultural Mediation[1]

Master Ram Chandra and Academic Journalism at Delhi College

Gail Minault

In the generation before the Indian revolt of 1857, the city of Delhi had revived from the devastation caused by repeated invasions in the eighteenth century. Indeed, the characterization of this age as a 'twilight'[2] seems unwarranted. It was an age that witnessed the flowering of Urdu poetry with the careers of Ghalib, Zauq, and Zafar, the emergence of the Urdu political press,[3] and the ferment of religious controversy.[4] It was also a time of intellectual interaction

1 An earlier version of this chapter appeared as 'Master Ram Chandra of Delhi College: Teacher, Journalist, and Cultural Intermediary', in *Annual of Urdu Studies*, 18, 2003, pp. 95–104.

2 Percival Spear, in *Twilight of the Mughals*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1951.

3 See Gail Minault, 'From *Akhbar* to News: The Development of the Urdu Press in Early Nineteenth-Century Delhi', in Kathryn Hansen and David Lelyveld (eds), *A Wilderness of Possibilities: Urdu Studies in Transnational Perspective*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 101–21; and Margrit Pernau, 'The *Dehli Urdu Akhbar*: Between Persian Akhbarat and English Newspapers', *Annual of Urdu Studies*, 18, 2003, pp. 105–31.

4 Religious controversy in Delhi at the time included Islamic reform and revival movements, summarized in Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India, Deoband, 1860–1900*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982, pp. 46–86; and

between the new British rulers and the Mughal service elites of north India (whether Hindu or Muslim), who still retained their administrative and cultural importance in the Mughal heartland.

The institution of learning that both contained that intellectual interaction and abetted the flowering of literature and the press was the Delhi College. I have discussed elsewhere the contributions of this institution to the intellectual life of its time,[5] and other contributors to this volume are enlarging upon that theme. Delhi College had two sections, a madrasa with an Oriental curriculum and a college with a Western curriculum, but its chief innovation was that all subjects, whether Oriental or Western, were taught in the vernacular, Urdu. This required collaboration between the European administrators and the Indian teachers and students at the college to translate and publish texts on scientific, social, and literary subjects. The college established its own press that published not only textbooks, but also periodicals containing articles about contemporary developments in science and technology, international events, and serialized translations of popular works of literature and biography.

The chief figure in the development of the periodicals that issued from the Delhi College Press in the 1840s and 1850s was Master Ram Chandra, the mathematics professor at the madrasa. A north Indian Kayastha, Ram Chandra came from a relatively humble background and achieved renown both as a mathematician and as an Urdu stylist, known for his clear, unpretentious prose. He edited two of the journals published by Delhi College: *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin*, a fortnightly, and *Muhibb-e Hind*, a monthly scientific and literary journal. In the pages of these periodicals, Ram Chandra made Western innovations in science and technology available to the literate public of north India, but also articulated an ideology of reform that involved openness to knowledge from wherever it issued. Ram Chandra's curiosity and love of learning reflected the ideas that were being discussed, often heatedly and sometimes acrimoniously, at the college and among

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missionary activity, studied in Avril A. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, London, Curzon Press, 1993, pp. 192–225.

5 In 'Delhi College and Urdu', *Annual of Urdu Studies*, 14, 1999, pp. 119–34; and *'Qiranu's-Sa'adain*: The Dialogue Between Eastern and Western Learning at Delhi College', in Jamal Malik, ed., *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History, 1760–1860*, Leiden, Brill, 2000, pp. 260–77.

intellectuals in Delhi at the time. This chapter will develop an intellectual portrait of Ram Chandra and discuss the contents of the Delhi College periodicals that exemplify his contributions to Urdu journalism and the transmission of knowledge.

Ram Chandra was the son of Rai Sunderlal Mathur who, like many Kayasthas, served the government. Literate in Persian and adept at record-keeping, Kayasthas served the Mughals and their successor states, including the East India Company as its territory expanded.[6] Sunderlal was from Delhi, but he was posted to Panipat as a *na'ib* (deputy) *tahsildar* when Ram Chandra was born in 1821. The boy started school when he was six at a *maktab* (school teaching Qoran and providing elementary education), where he would have received basic training in Arabic and Persian grammar, reading, and the copying of texts. The family later moved back to Delhi, where Ram Chandra entered the Delhi English School that eventually became Delhi College. Sunderlal died in 1831, leaving his widow with six sons. Ram Chandra was married a year later to the daughter of a wealthy Kayastha family. Her dowry helped alleviate the family's straitened economic circumstances, but it turned out that his wife was a deaf-mute. To cope with this adversity and to help his siblings get an education, Ram Chandra dutifully quit school and worked as a clerk for three years before re-enrolling in Delhi College after winning a scholarship. A devoted and successful student, Ram Chandra completed his studies in 1844, at which point he was employed by Delhi College as a teacher of Western science and mathematics in the Oriental (or madrasa) section of the school. In this capacity, he taught algebra, trigonometry, and other branches of mathematics through the medium of Urdu.[7]

He also introduced the madrasa students to new notions of experimental science, among other things, the heliocentric view of the universe. This caused controversy, as the Copernican revolution

6 For Kayastha subcastes and their careers in Mughal and post-Mughal bureaucracy, see Karen I. Leonard, *Social History of an Indian Caste: The Kayasthas of Hyderabad*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, especially pp. 57–123.

7 This biographical sketch of Ram Chandra is based on 'Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli Kalej*, Karachi, Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu, 1962, pp. 167–72, hereafter cited as MDK; Edwin Jacob, *A Memoir of Professor Yesudas Ram Chandra of Delhi*, Kanpur, Christian Church Mission Press, 1902; Sadiqu'r-Rahman Qidwa'i, *Master Ram Chandra*, Delhi, Department of Urdu, Delhi University, 1961; and K. Sajun Lal, 'Professor Ram Chandra as an Urdu Journalist', *Islamic Culture* [*IC*], vol. 23, nos 1–2, January–April 1949, pp. 22–36.

was still unacceptable to many learned *maulawis* in Delhi who remained convinced, on the authority of scripture, that the earth was the centre of God's creation. Even Saiyid Ahmad Khan, who was then a sub-judge in Delhi, wrote a pamphlet refuting heliocentrism. The founder of Aligarh, however, later changed his mind.[8] It is worthwhile mentioning that this controversy was not new to Muslim learned circles, as Maulawi Tafazzu'l-Husain Khan of Lucknow had already translated Newton's *Principia* and other works of Western mathematics and astronomy into Persian at the end of the eighteenth century. Still, the dissemination of these ideas in the vernacular to school students represented a new level of popularization, and hence a greater threat to established ideas.[9]

As part of his teaching duties, Ram Chandra became involved in the work of the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society. This society had been founded in the early 1840s by the principal of Delhi College, Felix Boutros, in order to translate textbooks into Urdu, to facilitate the teaching mission of both the Western and Oriental sections of the college. Ram Chandra and other teachers and students at the college participated in this effort, creating textbooks for their courses in the process. The society not only translated textbooks in medicine, mathematics, science, law, economics, and history from English into Urdu, but also translated works of literature—significantly, not all of them from Western languages. For example, Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit classics such as *Alf Laila wa Lail* ('1001 Nights'), Sa'di's *Gulistan*, and the *Dharma Shastras* were rendered into Urdu by and for the students in the oriental section of the college.[10]

The coexistence of Eastern and Western learning at Delhi College, mediated by the use of Urdu, was a rarity for its time. The Orientalist-Anglicist controversy in curricular matters, then raging among educators in India in the aftermath of Macaulay's

8 On this controversy, see Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, pp. 208–9.

9 M. Tavakoli-Targhi, 'Orientalism's Genesis Amnesia', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* [*CSSAAME*], vol. 16, no. 1, 1996, pp. 1–14; for more on these colonial 'star wars', see C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 247–64.

10 MDK, pp. 148–53; Report of the General Committee on Public Instruction, Bengal for 1840/41–1841/42, App. XV by Boutros, d. Delhi, 1 July 1842, India Office Library and Records [IOLR], V/24/948.

famous 'Minute on Education' of 1835, seemed less important in the Mughal capital city than it did in the chambers of government in Calcutta. But Delhi too reflected some of that intellectual friction. The controversy over the teaching of Copernican cosmology, noted above, was only one example. Ram Chandra championed scientific rationalism in the Oriental section of the college and thus had to mediate other cultural differences. His own work in mathematics provides an instructive example.

Ram Chandra translated several mathematics textbooks into Urdu, and produced two original works in English. One of these, *A Treatise on Problems of Maxima and Minima Solved by Algebra*, first published in 1850, was reprinted in London in 1859, commended by a leading mathematician there, and given a prize by the Indian government. Two Indian historians of science, Dhruv Raina and S. Irfan Habib, have commented that this treatise reveals Ram Chandra's intellect to be more than simply a conduit of Western mathematical knowledge to his students. In this treatise, Ram Chandra pursued a means of solving problems algebraically that might more easily have been solved using differential calculus. For this reason, some simply dismissed it. Augustus De Morgan, a professor of mathematics at London's University College, however, did not. De Morgan championed the work, wrote an introduction to the British edition, and pointed out that Ram Chandra's solution showed the strength of the Indian mathematical tradition in algebra. In developing this solution, Ram Chandra performed an important pedagogical purpose: to reveal to his students the importance of their own tradition as a supplement to the newer methodologies coming from the West. The Indian mathematical tradition going back to Bhaskara was thus, in some sense, revitalized. Raina and Habib see Ram Chandra's work as developing an alternative mathematical discourse that resisted cultural colonialism. Whether one agrees with that evaluation or not, what is certain is that Ram Chandra validated Indian intellectual contributions, and his own, in the course of his mathematical work.[11]

11 Ram Chandra, *A Treatise on Problems of Maxima and Minima Solved by Algebra* with a foreword by Augustus De Morgan, London, W.H. Allen & Co., 1859; Dhruv Raina and S. Irfan Habib, 'Cultural Foundations of a Nineteenth Century Mathematical Project', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 24, no. 37, 16 September 1989, pp. 2082–6; 'Regarding the recompense to be granted to Ram Chandra of the Delhi College for his work on algebra', Home (Educ.) 11–13, 8 May 1857, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

At Delhi College, the original moving spirit behind the translation society, Boutros, fell prey to ill health in the mid-1840s and was succeeded as principal by Dr Aloys Sprenger. Sprenger (1813–93) was a native of Tyrol who, after completing his medical education, joined the medical service of the British East India Company in order to pursue his real intellectual passion—Oriental literatures.[12] A scholar of Arabic and Persian, Dr Sprenger presided over the founding of the college press, the Matba'u'l-'Ulum, and founded the first college periodical, the weekly *Qiran'us-Sa'adain*, in 1845.[13] *Qiranu's-Sa'adain* is an Arabic astronomical term denoting the conjunction of the two fortunate planets, Jupiter and Venus; it also referred metaphorically to the interaction of two cultures, Eastern and Western, in the intellectual life of the college. Pandit Dharm Narain, Pandit Moti Lal, and Maulawi Karim Bakhsh, all associated with Delhi College and its press, served at various times as editors of *Qiran' us-Sa'adain*, which, as a weekly, contained current news as well as literary items. In 1849, for example, issues contained reports of the Sikh war and an obituary of Lord Auckland, the former governor general. The paper also chronicled the activities and durbars of the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, and occasionally printed Zafar's poetry. The weekly also printed notices of books published by the college press and book reviews, as well as translations of articles of literary and scientific interest.[14]

Ram Chandra occasionally contributed to *Qiranu's-Sa'adain*, but he also started the fortnightly *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin* (roughly translated: 'For the Benefit of the Readers') with the idea of spreading new learning beyond the walls of the Delhi College. The fortnightly

12 For Sprenger's distinguished career as a literary scholar, see Annemarie Schimmel, *German Contributions to the Study of Pakistani Linguistics*, Hamburg, 1981, pp. 48–74; and M. Ikram Chaghatai, 'Dr Aloys Sprenger (1813–93): His Life and Contribution to Urdu Language and Literature', *Iqbal Review*, vol. 36, no. 1, 1995, pp. 77–99.

13 Unfortunately very few copies of this journal have survived, and those in very fragile condition. I have seen a few issues from 1849 and 1853 in the Sajun Lal collection of newspapers at Osmania University, Hyderabad.

14 K. Sajun Lal, 'A Few Newspapers of the Pre-Mutiny Period', *Indian Historical Records Commission* [*IHRC*], 19 (1942), pp. 130–1. Sajun Lal summarizes the contents of issues from the collection of Muhiyu'd-Din Qadri Zor at the Idarah-e Adabiyat-e Urdu in Hyderabad. Cf. Nadir Ali Khan, *A History of Urdu Journalism*, Delhi, Idarah-e Adabiyat-e Dihli, 1991, pp. 136–45.

contained some news items, but more literary and scientific articles, serialized translations, and even illustrations: line drawings, maps, and diagrams (many of them copied from the *London Weekly Times*). It noted an earthquake in Constantinople in 1851 and the beginnings of the construction of the railroad leading westward from Calcutta.[15] In an example of a somewhat longer article in *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin*, Ram Chandra discussed 'The Condition of Muslim Learning in India' (*Hal-e 'Ulum Ahl-e Islam ka Hindustan Men*) and criticized not so much the nature of Islamic scholarship as the means of its transmission. He said that Islam and Muslim learning came to India via Iran and the Persian language. The official language of the court remained Persian, even when the rulers were Turkish speakers. The original Arabic sources of religious and scientific learning, and the Greek sources of Arabic science, were lost sight of in translation, and in digests of translations, in digests of digests, and in stylistic embroidery. As a result, Islamic learning stagnated, its rationalist beginnings submerged by scholasticism. Ram Chandra consequently commended the revival of the study of Arabic grammar as well as *hadith* and *fiqh* in the India of his day as a necessary return to the original sources and as a sign of greater originality in research.[16]

Ram Chandra's purposes here are linguistic and pedagogical. Though aware of the revival of religious scholarship taking place in Delhi thanks to the line of Shah Wali Ullah and Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz, Ram Chandra is also inspired by the type of scholarly activity occurring at Delhi College, with its emphasis on the need for accurate translation. In fact this article reveals much about Ram Chandra's intellectual approach to cultural encounter. Linguistic scholarship is necessary, and the translators need to know both the source language and the target language well. In addition, there is the question of transmission of knowledge. For that, there are two further considerations in his view: first, the target language needs to be that commonly spoken by the intended audience (Persian, in this article, being neither the language of the rulers nor of their Indian subjects), and secondly, knowledge needs to be conveyed in as direct and clear fashion as possible—

15 Sajun Lal in *IHRC*, 19, 1942, pp. 129–30.

16 *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin*, vol. 5, no. 9, 29 April 1850, in Sajun Lal collection, Osmania University.

no flowery hyperbole. Ram Chandra here, while not directly addressing British policies, nevertheless indirectly endorses the disestablishment of Persian and criticizes the ornate style of the courtly Persian of his day.[17] He also, by extension, champions the transmission of knowledge in an Indian language, Urdu in this case. So this article contains a summation of Ram Chandra's pedagogical approach.

His prose style further exemplified that approach. In contrast to much nineteenth-century Urdu prose, Ram Chandra's writing was deliberately conversational, colloquial, and straightforward. His style remains easily accessible to this day. Various scholars have praised his style and traced his influence in the prose of Ghalib's letters and in the greater simplicity of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan's later reformist writings in *Tahzibu'l-Akhlaq*. Certainly, Ram Chandra contributed to the development of a simplified, journalistic Urdu, but when placed beside Ghalib's epistolary prose, Ram Chandra's style appears more artless than seminal.[18] His championship of clear expository prose in Urdu was certainly influential among his many students at Delhi College and was transmitted via his tireless periodical publications. It seems fair to say of Ram Chandra's prose that he wrote as he spoke, he did both in order to teach, and he published in order to reach as wide an audience as possible, though the circulation of his journals was never large.[19] We should remember, however, that the practice of passing one issue of a journal among several readers and the persistence of the oral tradition, which encouraged discussion of published ideas, meant that circulation figures do not necessarily reflect the impact of any given publication.[20]

17 M. Tavakoli-Targhi has pointed out that the challenge to official Persian and the move toward, vernacularization was under way in India even before the establishment of British control. 'Orientalism's Genesis Amnesia', *CSSAAME*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1996, p. 7.

18 Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi, *Zauq-o-Justaju*, Lucknow, Idarah-e Farugh-e Urdu, 1967, pp. 273–5; cf. Saiyida Ja'far, *Master Ram Chandra aur Urdu Nasr ke Irtiqa men unka Hissa*, Hyderabad, Abul Kalam Azad Oriental Research Institute, 1960, pp. 90–9.

19 According to M. Atiq Siddiqui, *Subah-e Shimal-o-Maghribi ke Akhbarat-o-Matbu'at*, Aligarh, Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu (Hind), 1962, p. 112, the circulation of *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin* at its peak was 150, that of *Muhibb-e Hind* was 56.

20 Avril Powell discusses this phenomenon in the context of missionary activity in *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, p. 209.

Examples of Ram Chandra's popular scientific writing in *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin* include 'About the Telescope' (*Hal Durbin ka*),[21] and 'On Astronomy' (*'Ilm-e Haiy'at*).[22] In the first, he discusses how Dutch lensmakers discovered by accident that putting two lenses together, one concave and one convex, produced a much greater degree of magnification than could be achieved by only one. The instrument was then developed for observing objects at a distance, and it became useful in navigation. Galileo then turned the telescope to the heavens, discovering the moons orbiting Jupiter and deducing that the planets similarly orbited the sun. In the article on astronomy, Ram Chandra discusses the difference between the sun and the moon, pointing out that the moon does not give out light itself, but rather reflects that of the sun. He then discusses in simple language the mechanism of a lunar eclipse. His style is conversational, and—appropriately enough—like that of a schoolmaster giving a lesson: offering examples, explaining the practical uses of the information, impressing upon his readers the importance of observation in arriving at scientific conclusions. His approach, as Habib and Raina emphasize, is one of scientific rationality, of using empirical methods to transcend stifling textual authority.[23]

Ram Chandra followed *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin* with another periodical published from Delhi College, a monthly founded in September 1847. At first called *Khairkhwah-e Hind* (or 'Well-wisher of India'), the title of the journal was changed after two months to *Muhibb-e Hind* ('One who Loves India' or 'Indian Patriot') to avoid confusion with another *Khairkhwah-e Hind* published from Mirzapur.[24] The contents of this journal were very similar to those of *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin*: articles by Ram Chandra and others on scientific, historical, and literary topics; serialized works of general interest; and coverage of local cultural events, especially *musha'iras*. *Muhibb-e Hind* also had occasional illustrations: sketches, pen portraits of biographical subjects, and maps.

21 *Fawa'id* (6 September 1847), rep. in Saiyida Ja'far, *Master Ram Chandra*, pp. 153–5.

22 *Fawa'id* (15 November 1846), rep. in Ja'far, *Master Ram Chandra*, pp. 158–60.

23 S. Irfan Habib and Dhruv Raina, 'The Discourse of Scientific Rationality: A Study of Master Ram Chandra', in T. Niranjana, P. Sudhir, and V. Dhareshwar (eds), *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India*, Calcutta, Seagull, 1993, pp. 348–68.

24 Sajun Lal, 'Ram Chandra as an Urdu Journalist', *IC*, vol. 23, nos 1–2, January–April 1949, p. 33.

In one of the earliest issues of his monthly, Ram Chandra wrote an important article, 'A Discussion of the Education of the People of India' (*Tarbiyat-e Ahl-e Hind ka Bayan*), that further developed his pedagogical ideas. In the Anglicist-Orientalist debate that had by then stirred up intellectual circles in Delhi, Ram Chandra acknowledged the importance of a knowledge of English for scientific learning, but nevertheless firmly backed the vernacular as the most effective medium of education. He did so not only in the interests of bringing about a greater synthesis of Eastern and Western knowledge, but also and especially because it would render that knowledge accessible to more people. He noted that, in India, only a tiny minority knew English, and even they did not know it all that well. He noted that English was, if anything, even harder than Persian. The spread of knowledge via English therefore would benefit only a few, and would lead to the kinds of problems that he had earlier noted concerning the transmission of knowledge in Persian: misunderstandings, mistranslations, and so on. He answered the Anglicists' argument that there was no one Indian vernacular by arguing that Urdu was understood from Attock to Patna and from Hyderabad, Deccan to the borders of Nepal. No other language in India was used and comprehended to that extent. Urdu was thus the closest thing to a national language (*qaumi zuban*) in India and it should become the medium of higher education, not English. All peoples of India would benefit from the propagation of knowledge in a generally acceptable vernacular, and in his view, the obvious candidate was Urdu.[25] In this article, Ram Chandra shows himself to be a sharp critic of Anglicist educational policies. He may have favoured Western science and empirical methods, but as an Indian intellectual reformer, he saw that knowledge could only change society if it was conveyed in an Indian vernacular.

Further evidence of Ram Chandra's emphasis on linguistic precision and his championship of rationalism appeared in *Muhibb-e Hind* as 'A Discussion of the Mistakes that Hindu Scholars have made in Various Sciences in the Shastras' (*Hal un ghaltiyon ka jo ke fazilan-e hunud ne 'ulum-e mukhtalifa shastar men ki hain*), in which

25 *Khairkhwah-e Hind*, 2 (October 1847), cited in K.A. Faruqi, *Zauq-o-Justaju*, pp. 277–81; rep. of K.A. Faruqi's introduction to S.R. Qidwa'i, *Master Ram Chandra*, pp. 38–42.

he criticized Hindu learned men in much the same way as he had earlier criticized Muslim learning. In this lengthy article, he took Hindu pandits to task for their obscurantism, their tendency to confound religious formulations with scientific premises, and their attachment to textual authority as opposed to empirical observation.[26] Ram Chandra can be hailed for his role in mediating between eastern and western learning, and in an additional respect this is quite true: He was critical of all sides. He found Hindu and Islamic learning worthy of disparagement on rationalist grounds, but he was also willing to criticize the British for the imposition of their own language on the Indian intelligentsia, a policy that he felt would hinder the propagation of science and learning generally.

Titles of other articles that appeared in *Muhibb-e Hind* give evidence of Ram Chandra's eclectic interests as well as the range of topics that interested his potential readers: from 'A Description of a Diving Bell, by Which Means Things Sunken in the Sea may be Recovered' (*Zikr-e daiving bel, jis se duba hua asbab samandar men se nikal saken*),[27] to 'The Divisibility of Matter: A Strange Description from the Researches of European Scientists and Scholars' (*Ek 'ajib hal hukmayan-o-'aqilon-e yurup ki tahqiqat men se*).[28] He published scientific articles on the work of Sir Isaac Newton[29] and on the relationship of the human mind and body (*Hal-e jism aur 'aql insan ka*).[30] Cultural articles included items about ancient Greece: 'On Demosthenes',[31] China: 'On Confucius',[32] and Iran: a biography of the Safavid Shah Abbas.[33] Another very popular genre was the travel-cum-ethnographic narrative, such as Lane's *Customs of the Modern Egyptians*,[34] Elphinstone's *Kingdom of Caubul*,[35] and—putting the shoe on the other foot—the serialization of an original publication from the college press, *Tarikh-e Yusufi*, or the travels of Yusuf Khan Kamalposh to England.[36] Ram Chandra also discussed

26 *Muhibb-e Hind* [*MH*], 21–2 (May–June 1849).
27 *MH*, 6 (February 1848).
28 Ibid.
29 *MH*, 9 (May 1848).
30 *MH*, 13 (September 1848).
31 *MH*, 8 (April 1848).
32 *MH*, 9 (May 1848).
33 *Khairkhwah-e Hind*, 1 (September 1847).
34 *MH*, 34 (June 1850).
35 *MH*, 18 (February 1849).
36 *MH*, 28 (December 1849); 30–2 (February–April 1850).

the uses of new scientific knowledge in agriculture and horticulture,[37] and summarized works of history and popular science. One of the regular features in *Muhibb-e Hind*, otherwise devoted to the dissemination of new knowledge, was a monthly selection of Urdu poetry by the likes of Zafar, Mir Dard, and Shah Nasir. Though Ram Chandra was critical of flowery, poetic prose style, he was not averse to verse, demonstrating that his literary sensibility was more than prosaic. Perhaps he also thought that this feature might increase the circulation of the journal. Whatever the reason, poetic offerings were an important element in both *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin* and *Muhibb-e Hind*, indicative of the importance of poetry and poetic assemblies in the literary life of Delhi at the time.[38]

Ram Chandra continued publishing both *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin* and *Muhibb-e Hind* concurrently, with a considerable duplication of contents, until 1851. At the end of that year, he closed *Muhibb-e Hind*, as its circulation had shrunk from a high of 56 to 32. Then, in July of 1852, he converted to Christianity. This caused an uproar at the college and led to the withdrawal of a number of students.[39] The circulation of *Fawa'idu'n-Nazirin* plummeted, and by the end of that year, it too had ceased publication. It was an unfortunate end to the story of these two journals, especially given their eclectic contents and the lively intellect that animated them both. Ram Chandra's purposes throughout had been essentially pedagogical: to inform the public about a wide variety of topics, both Oriental and Western, to promote scientific curiosity and rationalism, and to facilitate cultural dialogue. It is a pity that, by his conversion, Ram Chandra went too far in the direction of the culture of his colonial masters.

The controversy over Ram Chandra's conversion points to the perils of cultural mediation. One of the elements in both Muslim and Hindu resistance to Western science was that it carried the taint of its Christian cultural association. Delhi College had conscientiously avoided any such association, to the extent that any institution founded under British rule could. Ram Chandra had maintained a skeptical distance from all religious beliefs. Indeed,

37 *MH*, 23–7 (July–November 1849).

38 S.R. Qidwa'i, *Master Ram Chandra*, app., pp. 178–94; *MH*, 14–37, with some missing (September 1848–August/September 1850), IOLR.

39 According to MDK, 25 students withdrew, or were withdrawn, when the news broke of Ram Chandra's conversion, p. 56.

many who knew him were astonished that such a rationalist as he would become a convert. He had resisted the reformist theology of Ram Mohan Roy, and neglected to read the Christian literature given him by some of his British acquaintances. In his writings, Ram Chandra emphasized the rationality of Western science, and attacked the scholasticism of Hindu and Muslim systems of knowledge on the basis of empirical, not religious, criteria. Like a good translator, however, the cultural mediator needs to know both the source and the target cultures well, and the risks of misunderstandings are great. Ram Chandra's championship of Western science and his criticism of Hindu and Muslim learning would have led to accusations of pro-Christian leanings, whether he had them or not.[40]

Ram Chandra's intellectual life apparently did not meet his spiritual needs. We know from his youth that he had his share of hardship, but that he was earnest and dutiful in the fulfillment of his family obligations. His marriage to a deaf-mute woman must have been a tremendous burden to one of his intelligence and communicativeness. He found no comfort in the rituals of his home life, but he was clearly a seeker after the truth, which he found in his mathematical and scientific work. It was undoubtedly a lonely and difficult existence, involving a certain amount of rejection from his own social milieu. Ultimately, his friendship with Captain and Mrs Lewis, stationed in Delhi, and with Mr Taylor, the college principal, were crucial. For Ram Chandra, their personal example outweighed any number of proselytizing pamphlets. Here were enlightened individuals who, for all their interest in rationality and science, were also devout Christians.

Becoming a Christian seemed to be a way to integrate his devotion to rationalism and his need for spiritual solace. Chiman Lal, a surgeon in Delhi, fellow Kayastha, and former Delhi College student who had gone on to attend the Bengal Medical College, concurred. The two were baptized in the same ceremony at St James Church, near Kashmiri Gate in Delhi, on 11 July 1852. Unfortunately, their conversion confirmed the suspicions of many Indians in the years just before 1857 that Western learning did,

40 Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan and 'Deputy' Nazir Ahmad (the latter a Delhi College graduate) were also accused, during their careers as educational reformers, of having become Christians by association.

indeed, carry the contagion of Christianity.[41] It also endangered the mission of cultural mediation that Ram Chandra's career at Delhi College had done so much to advance.

C.A. Bayly, in his massive study, *Empire and Information*, makes a comment concerning cultural encounter: 'Our understanding of colonial discourse must reflect the pervasiveness of Indian agency, of the Indian intellectual challenge, and of Indian cultural vitality.'[42] This observation seems particularly applicable to Ram Chandra. He acted to propagate learning not only at Delhi College but more widely, he wrote incessantly using the new medium of the periodical press, and he challenged both sides in the cultural dialogue to remain open to the vast amount of new knowledge in the world, whether it arose in the West or the East. Ram Chandra was a mediator, a pedagogue, and a popularizer. As with many such figures, his contributions have been overlooked or underestimated. Partly that was because the Delhi College, his institutional platform, was destroyed during the revolt of 1857, and although it was revived thereafter, it never recaptured its former prominence. Then, too, English won out in the matter of a national medium of higher education. In the final analysis, Ram Chandra's most important legacy was in the evolution of Urdu journalistic style—his clear, conversational prose and his readiness to criticize Indians and British alike—exemplifying what Bayly commended as 'Indian intellectual challenge and...cultural vitality.'

41 For more on the conversion controversy, see Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, pp. 206–19.

42 Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p. 314.

7

Scholar Manqué or Mere Munshi?

Maulawi Karimu'd-Din's Career in the Anglo-Oriental Education Service

Avril A. Powell

Maulawi Karimu'd-Din served the British education service in north-west India during three distinct phases of his life. He was educated in the Delhi College from 1840 to 1844, and then worked in Delhi with one of its principals, Aloys Sprenger, on translations and publications of texts. From 1848 until about 1856 he taught Urdu in the Agra Government College. After the rebellion of 1857 he served in various roles in the Punjab education service, including a period as manager of the school textbook depot and in several posts in the schools' inspectorate. We have no record of his personal feelings about such service, but enough can be gleaned from his own publications, from the comments of his contemporaries, both British and Indian, and from government education records, to estimate his significance as a man of letters, as a teacher and as an administrator. If the years spent in his youth under Sprenger's patronage in Delhi seemed to augur a much more significant scholarly career than was actually fulfilled, the reasons might be sought in external factors such as the loss at key junctures of important scholarly patrons, and the effects of the upheavals of 1857. His unassuming personality, in an atmosphere of increasing competition among seekers of subaltern government

service and patronage in the munshi stratum of Indian literati, should also be taken into account, as should the question of whether Karim's forte was really compilation and translation rather than original composition. His trajectory through the colonial education service is useful in drawing attention to the minor triumphs and considerable travails of a lowly ranking, but greatly respected, translator and teacher who remained in the end something of a scholar manqué, even though one modern critic has claimed for him the accolade of 'Urdu's first novelist'. His years in the orbit of the Delhi College were undoubtedly very crucial to his subsequent career.[1]

We have more information about Karim than his rather low profile might suggest likely, partly because of the spotlight cast on his family by the conversion to Christianity of his brother, Imadu'd-Din, some nine years his younger, followed shortly afterwards by the baptism of his father, one other brother and their wives and children. As converts are apt to do, Imadu'd-Din frequently publicized his family's history, throwing light on the situation faced by his grandfather and father at the onset of British rule in the region.[2] Much of this information is corroborated in rather less detail by some autobiographical fragments written by Maulawi Karimu'd-Din himself. An entry about himself in an encyclopaedia of Urdu writers, compiled originally by Garcin de Tassy, who observed north Indian literary life from his Paris study for over 50 years, was updated by Karim and published in Delhi, to include contemporary poets and writers. This gives a mere six-page chronology of

1 This study draws together, and takes further, two previous papers in which I have considered two specialized aspects of Karimu'd-Din's life, namely his response to European challenges to Islam, and his role in history textbook controversies in late 1860s Punjab. See Avril A. Powell, 'Reciprocities and Divergences Concerning Religious Traditions in Two Families of Scholars in North India', in Jamal Malik (ed.), *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History, 1760–1860*, Leiden, Brill, 2000, pp. 188–222; 'History Textbooks and the Transmission of the Pre-colonial Past in North-Western India in the 1860s and 1870s', in Daud Ali (ed.), *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 91–133. For his claim as a novelist see Mahmud Ilahi, *Urdu Ka Phela Navil: Khat-e Taqdir*, Lucknow, Danish Mahal, 1965.

2 Reverend Maulawi Imadu'd-Din's several accounts of his life include, *Waqa'at-e 'Imadiyya*, 2nd edn, Ludhiana, American Mission Press, 1874; *Mohammedan Brought to Christ being the Autobiography of a Native Clergyman in India, translated from the Hindustanee*, 2nd edn, London, Church Missionary House, 1870.

his life until his late twenties, but significantly for the purposes of this study it was written near the end of his prolific 'Delhi College' phase, and contains an annotated list of his publications up to that date.[3] Some manuscript correspondence between Karim and his Delhi mentor, Aloys Sprenger, recently discovered by Ikram Chaghatai in Berlin, and the education proceedings of the North-West Provinces and Punjab governments, help to contextualize his career.[4] Garcin de Tassy's many references to Karim, especially in later editions of his *Histoire de la littérature hindouie et hindoustanie*, in which he devoted 12 pages to an annotated list of 34 of his publications, provides a very useful starting point for an evaluation of his contribution.[5] Otherwise, Karim's own publications comprise the main primary source for this study.[6] As a minor cog in the education service's wheel he has attracted very little attention until recently in secondary works, especially as, although he was renowned as a host of *musha'iras* in 1840s Delhi, his own verse has not stood the test of time.

Ikram Chaghatai's many recent publications both in Urdu and English on several other 'Delhi renaissance' figures have provided much significant contextual material. There is one published Urdu monograph on his literary significance which aims to place Karim in the historical context of his 'life and times'.[7] This contains summaries of his publications, including useful information concerning some works that no longer survive. Some histories of Urdu literature make only passing reference to him. An unpublished

3 Karimu'd-Din and F. Fallon, *Tarikh-e shu'ra-e Urdu/A History of Urdu Poets* chiefly translated from Garcin de Tassy's *Histoire de la littérature hindouie et hindoustanie* by F. Fallon Esq. and Moulvee Kareemoodeen with additions, Delhi College 1848, Delhi, Matba'u'l-'ulum, 1848, pp. 468–73.

4 The Berlin archive apparently contains some further brief autobiographical data in manuscript that I have not seen. My references to the Berlin archive are limited to Ikram Chaghatai's reproduction of some letters between Karimu'd-Din and his patron Aloys Sprenger and Chaghatai's very detailed notes on the context of the correspondence, 'Ek nadir majmu'a mukatib', in the quarterly journal, *Urdu*, vol. 61, nos 3–4, parts 4–5, 1985, pp. 138–82.

5 *Histoire de la littérature hindouie et hindoustanie*, 2nd edn, 1870, reprinted, 3 vols, New York, Bunt Franklin, 1968, vol. II, pp. 166–77.

6 See Garcin de Tassy's list, *Histoire*, II, pp. 168–77, supplemented by British Museum and Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC), London, catalogues of Hindustani Printed Books.

7 S.A. Siddique, *Maulawi Karimu'd-Din: Hyat aur Karname*, Patna, Tariq Publishers, 1978.

PhD thesis on vernacular education in the Punjab in the 1850s to 1870s has commented on Karim's later years of government service, and his relationship with European Orientalists in the Punjab.[8] An unpublished thesis at Karachi University has not been seen. Overall, Karimu'd-Din has not had the critical attention he deserves. The present study aims to evaluate the significance of this somewhat neglected, modest and subordinate figure against the backcloth of a stage dominated by some much better known scholars and administrators, both Indian and British.

The Delhi Stage

Karimu'd-Din's family home was Panipat where, following their migration from Persia in the sixteenth century, his ancestors had been associated with the shrine of the Sufi saint, Shaikh Bu 'Ali Qalandar. According to his brother, 'Imadu'd-Din, they had enjoyed 'fairly prosperous circumstances' during Shah Jahan's reign, having been granted 'ample revenues and estates' in the Punjab.[9] Although never particularly close to the centres of power and influence, they were hard hit during the eighteenth century, the brothers blaming, variously, Nadir Shah's depradations in the region and the unworldliness of their grandfather, Maulawi Muhammad Fazil, for the loss of their remaining *jagirs* when the East India Company took over the region in the early nineteenth century. Facing considerably straitened circumstances, their grandfather then seemed to settle for a life of quiet teaching and scholarship among a circle of relatives, making a modest living by teaching the sons of neighbouring Panipati Sunni families.[10] It is a history of 'turning inwards' shared by many other middle-ranking Muslim families at this particular juncture, and provides an explanation for the educational and career options taken up by the next generation, led by the eldest brother, Karim.

8 Jeffrey Mark Diamond, 'Developing Indigenous and European Knowledge: The Vernacular Education Movement and Neo-Orientalism in the Punjab, 1849–70', PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2002.

9 'Imadu'd-Din, *Mohammedan Brought to Christ*, p. 5.

10 Garcin de Tassy also recounted the hardships faced by the family in the eighteenth century, caused first by Nadir Shah's invasion, and later by failure to respond positively to British overtures. *Histoire*, II, pp. 166–8.

After reading elementary Persian and Arabic books at home with his father, Maulawi Siraju'd-Din, Karimu'd-Din sought to benefit from some new opportunities offered by recent British educational initiatives by moving to Delhi in the late 1830s, when he was in his mid-teens. At first he maintained himself by copying manuscripts.[11] In 1840, aged about 18, he got admittance to the Oriental department of the Delhi College. Any scruples were probably fairly easily overcome, for Karim was representative in his class and economic background of many north Indian Muslim families who were beginning to opt for the Anglo-Oriental colleges at this time, in contrast to those socially and religiously higher placed *ashraf* (well born) and nobility who still looked down on such forms of foreign and public education for their sons and who continued to hire private tutors or send them to the older madrasas of the city.[12]

Karim was a 'scholarship boy' at the time when Lord Auckland's compromise had just saved the principle of scholarships for the Oriental departments against moves by the Anglicists to abolish any such support for what was increasingly regarded in official circles as 'useless' learning.[13] The education reports on the college show that he won scholarships, successively of Rs 16 and Rs 20 monthly, to help fund his studies in the Arabic section for the years 1843–5. Among the Sunni students of the Oriental department who competed with him he was placed fifth the first year and second the subsequent year. His very worthy, but not exceptional, record as a student may help to explain his later struggles to compete for patronage when seeking appointments that were also sought after by some of these boyhood rivals. Examination answers written by the students who topped him are extant in the reports of the education department. Although we do not have the benefit of Karim's own answers, his class fellows' answers on political economy, history and 'the proper use of time' provide some insights

11 Autobiography, *Tarikh*, pp. 467–9; his own dating of his entry to Delhi College to 1816 (before he was born!) is an obvious error, confirmed by the education reports.

12 For attitudes among Muslims to Delhi College see Avril A. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny Delhi*, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press Ltd., 1993, ch. 7, 'New Mood in Delhi', especially, pp. 200–1.

13 Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir (eds), *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy, 1781–1843*, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press Ltd., 1999, especially, pp. 304–11.

into the ethos of the college when Karim studied there.[14] These answers certainly show that, for examination purposes at least, Delhi College students were successfully imbibing Enlightenment values. In fact, although he belonged to the Oriental department, Karim must have benefited from the new efforts to encourage the students in this section to learn English as an option, for his later translations into Urdu from English as well as Arabic, witness to his competence in the new 'language of government'.

The subjects and particular texts studied in the Oriental department throw light not only on the kind of 'mindset' the administrators were attempting to mould, but also on some of Karim's later translation commissions in Delhi itself, and subsequently in Lahore where he was to have considerable responsibility for school textbooks in his later years. In 1842–3, along with 10 other boys, seven of whom were 'scholars' like himself, and under the tutelage of the renowned Arabic professor, Maulana Mamluk 'Ali, he studied the second half of Hariri's *Maqamat*, portions of the *Hidaya*, the whole of the *Tarikh-e Timuri* and part of 'Abu'l Fazl's correspondence. He imbibed, in other words, some of the classic texts of mainly secular knowledge, valued over the centuries in Indo-Muslim scholarly circles.[15] Karim also benefited from a policy, new in his final years of study, insisting that the students of the Oriental department studied, in addition to the Arabic and Persian works that were central to their syllabus, some translations in Urdu of works of European philosophy, law, political economy, history and science that were being simultaneously studied in the English department of the college. In 1842, for example, the Arabic class to which he belonged studied in Urdu four of the books of Euclid, 'Brown's Arithmetic' and a geography text. Attention will return later to the

14 A fellow scholar, Qadir 'Ali, who topped Karim in the examinations of 1843, based an answer on 'the proper use of time' on a distinction between 'reason' and the 'passions' to argue that time spent acquiring knowledge is passed in 'a proper manner', and that attention to the 'good' rather than the 'evil' consequences of human actions will please God's will 'that we should do good not only to ourselves but the community in which we live'. *General Report on Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1843–44*, Agra, Agra Ukhbar Press, n.d., appendix 'O', p. xciii–iv (hereafter *GRPI/NWP*).

15 Karim listed among the subjects he studied, logic, philosophy, geometry, arithmetic, algebra, surveying, rhetoric, history, *adab* (norms of conduct), and law, *Tarikh*, p. 469. Cf. Gail Minault, 'Qiranu's-Sa'adain: The Dialogue between Eastern and Western Learning at Delhi College', in Malik (ed.), *Perspectives*, pp. 260–77.

implications of his efforts, only some four years afterwards, to make the ubiquitous *Maqamat* (the 'Assemblies' of Hariri) available in Urdu to subsequent generations of students for their moral edification on the grounds that it encapsulated 'universal' values.[16]

The reason for the new emphasis on studying works of European scholarship in Urdu translation during Karim's time at Delhi College reflected the appointment in 1840 of Felix Boutros to the joint principalship of the two departments. Although his contribution has been somewhat overshadowed by his more flamboyant Austrian successor, Aloys Sprenger, it was Boutros who was responsible for initiating the innovatory translation programmes that were to bring Karim to notice and to employment. As the roles of these principals are highlighted in other chapters in this volume attention will be restricted here to the impact of Boutros's initiatives on Karim's opportunities for scholarly collaboration and publication.[17]

Initially Karim perceived the new Vernacular Translation Society mainly as the means to satisfy his own thirst for Western knowledge, recording the eagerness with which, while still a student, he devoured every single volume translated by the Society from English into Urdu, mentioning also that Boutros enabled the students to acquire knowledge of practical subjects such as the civil and criminal law codes, political economy, and mathematics.[18] He was among many other Delhi College students who, at this time, took advantage of the extracurricular activities that linked the Oriental and the English departments.

While many successful ex-students, such as the mathematician Ram Chandra, were taken on to the college staff after finishing their studies, Karim does not seem to have been among them. It is not known whether, at this stage, he made some unsuccessful efforts to obtain such an appointment. His forte seemed, anyway, to be translation and publishing rather than teaching, although when later seeking teaching posts he referred to teaching experience,

16 For Karim's scholarship, and the courses studied, see syllabi of the two departments and list of works prescribed for scholarship competitors in *General Report on Public Instruction in the Bengal Presidency for 1842–43*, Calcutta, Government Press, 1843, pp. 246, 256–7, xxiv; *GRPI/NWP* for 1843–4, Agra, 1845, pp. 57, 62.

17 Minault identifies Boutros as probably an Arab Christian from either Egypt or the Levant, educated in France, *Qiran*, p. 266.

18 *Tarikh*, p. 469.

probably private tutoring, while he was still in Delhi.[19] Certainly he remained in Delhi from 1844 to 1848, years later referred to as ones of 'unemployment', during which he nevertheless married and took responsibility for the education of his younger brothers. Certainly too, he continued to pursue his scholarly ambitions, partly by setting up his own press to publish Urdu translations independently. His ambitions were thwarted, he recorded, when some of his partners seized the press and he was unable to get any help from the government for its restitution. Significantly, he represented his purpose in this enterprise as the altruistic one of wishing to spread 'knowledge' among his less-privileged compatriots, explaining,

> My intention was to translate examples of books representative of many skills and overcoming the difficulties to the best of my ability, to publish them in this press, so it is of no consequence whether it profits me or not for my main aim was to make available at a cheap price to the common people of India knowledge which is not now available to them.[20]

Retrospectively, in spite of some setbacks, the years 1845–8, while he was still in the orbit of the Delhi College, marked the peak of Karim's scholarly fulfilment. He seems to have been part of the cultured intelligentsia of the city, and although he later disclaimed any pretensions to be a poet himself, he not only held musha'iras at his own home, but also published some of the poems recited there in a monthly journal.[21] Although he was no longer attached to the college he had close ties with all its scholars, and enjoyed, in particular, the interest and patronage of the new principal, Aloys Sprenger who, already making a reputation for himself as an Arabist with close ties to local Muslim scholars, seemed to have more influence with government than Boutros had managed. Recognizing Karim's talents, Sprenger saved him in the nick of time from the consequences of his failure in private publishing by

19 Karim to Sprenger complaining that a scholar whom the latter was favouring over him for the Arabic professorship at Agra had actually been his own student for courses in grammar, philosophy, and *adab*. Agra, 4 July 1852, in 'Ek nadir', p. 179.

20 *Tarikh*, p. 469.

21 Tassy, *Histoire*, II, p.168. Karim wrote somewhat paradoxically, considering the musha'iras he held, and the compilation of other peoples' poems for which he was responsible: 'Love of writing Urdu poetry is not me at all, rather I hold reciting poetry to be bad, because it's not the business of men of learning. Those people who are free from having to earn their living have taken this means of amusing themselves and obtaining vicarious pleasure.' *Tarikh*, p. 470.

employing him in his own ambitious translation programme under the auspices of the same Vernacular Translation Society that Boutros had founded and Sprenger had now taken on. Many of the volumes prepared by Karim at this time contain prefaces indicating a close though subordinate working relationship to Sprenger, who seemingly selected all the titles.[22] Sprenger, though he was later to modify his view, testified at this time, to Karim's 'talent and learning', to his 'extensive knowledge of the Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages', even suggesting that he surpassed 'many molvis of the present day', and praising his readiness to study 'many modern sciences', including mathematics, history, and political economy through the medium of the vernacular, tasks for which his own recent education under Boutros and Mamluk 'Ali had excellently prepared him.[23]

Karim's scholarly potential is evidenced by the substantial works of research, compilation, and editing he produced during these few Delhi years under Sprenger's guidance. The first work prepared for publication seems to have been a treatise on literary composition, the *Ujalahu'l- ulalah*, that he published in 1845, from his own press, which according to Garcin de Tassy received 'a most favourable welcome from contemporary poets'.[24] It was soon after this, and probably when his own press foundered, that he was taken up by Sprenger to prepare works for the college press, the Matba'u'l-'ulum. Three *tazkiras* (biographical memoirs) and histories followed in quick succession, their comprehensiveness and range suggesting that he must have spent most of the next three years on their compilation. The first of these, the *Tarikh-e Abu'l Fida* ('History of Abu'l Fida') was commissioned from him by Sprenger to provide an Urdu translation of this history of the Arab lands from the creation to the early fourteenth century, together with some other later historical works.[25]

22 For example, prefaces to his tazkiras of poets and his translation of Abu'l Fida's history.

23 Sprenger, 16 December 1847, in General Proceedings (Educ.), no. 43/13, 13 January 1848.

24 *Histoire*, II, p. 170. Garcin de Tassy called it 'la première nourriture, traité sur la métrique'.

25 English title, 'Hindustani translation of Abulfeda's history, with additions from other sources', 3 vols, lithographed, Delhi, Matba' u'l-'ulum, 1846–7. This fourteenth-century compilation of earlier histories was highly regarded by eighteenth-century European Orientalists.

The two tazkiras, in Arabic and Urdu, for which Karim should be noted in this period are the *Tazkirah musammi fara'id al-dahr* (subtitled, in Urdu, *Tarikh-e shu'ara-e 'arab*, 'History of Arabic Poets')[26] and the *Tarikh-e shu'ara-e Urdu* ('History of Urdu Poets'), the latter already mentioned above for the light it sheds on his own family background and his literary contributions up to 1848, its year of publication.[27] Although his 'Urdu Poets' was based on Garcin de Tassy's earlier *Histoire de la littérature hindouie et hindoustanie*, this French author and commentator, who had a high opinion of Karim, accredited him, rather than his co-reviser, S.W. Fallon, with the additional entries, and indeed for considerable restructuring of the work. If the entries on earlier Hindu authors were mainly Garcin de Tassy's, as was the 'avant-propos', Karim had written a new preface, and added several new sections on Urdu writers, a section of new and particular interest being that on his own contemporaries, including, in characteristically modest tones, himself. Sprenger, on the other hand, was later rather grudging about the revisions, commenting that the Urdu version had 'some additions, but several omissions and hardly any improvement'.[28] The 'contemporary' section nevertheless constitutes, in spite of later neglect, a major source for knowledge and evaluations of mid-nineteenth-century Urdu poetry, written from an 'insider's' perspective.[29]

Apart from the contribution these works made to the bringing together of knowledge about the roots of contemporary Islamic and Indo-Muslim literary traditions, thus boosting the confidence of present-day scholars, these volumes exemplify the standards of

26 Published Delhi, 1847; described in the British Museum catalogue of Hindustani Printed Books as 'A History of Arabic Poets, from the earliest to the present day, containing 397 biographies with specimens of their compositions, compiled from various Arabic Tazkerahs and translated into Urdoo by Mowlowee Kareemuddeen'.

27 On the tazkira of Urdu poets see Ghulam Hussain Zawal Fiqar, 'Tabaqat-e Hind aur Maulawi Ghulam Husain Zawal Fiqar', in *Shumar*, 40 (July 1967), pp. 9–30. Little attention has otherwise been paid to this work. Thanks to Leena Mitford, Urdu curator at OIOC, for checking subsequent tazkiras and histories of Urdu literature: only two of the 20 that were checked acknowledged Karimu'd-Din's contributions.

28 A. Sprenger, *A Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Hindu'stany Manuscripts of the Libraries of the King of Oudh*, vol. 1, Calcutta, J. Thomas, 1854, p. 191.

29 For Garcin de Tassy's view of Karim's additions to his own work see *Histoire*, II, pp. 171–2.

meticulous scholarship and publication skills so remarkable in the work of this new Delhi press. All the works were exquisitely produced, on thick, high quality paper, bearing instead of the traditional calligraphically complex frontispiece, a European style title page in both English and Urdu. These compilations and translations from Arabic were certainly for the benefit of fellow scholars, both Indian and European, rather than for direct college usage. They no doubt reflected Sprenger's own agenda for making the best of both East and West available in north India, but also demonstrate Karim's capacity to work in both languages and to assimilate what he considered most worthwhile from the literary and historical traditions of the past, and from the wider Muslim world, for the benefit of his own generation of north Indian scholars. Another translation of this kind which, while being an important work of Arab scholarship, probably had a closer association with the college's practical teaching requirements, was Karim's commentary, the *Sharah-e maqamat-e Hariri*, the famous 'Assemblies of Al-Hariri', composed in Basra in the eleventh century, which he undertook while still in Delhi, but only completed in 1849, after he had left the city.[30] As shown above, he had studied the *Maqamat* in Arabic while still a college student. Making such classic works of moral guidance available in Urdu, often with commentaries showing their application in mid-nineteenth-century India, was to become a hallmark of his literary enterprises.

If most of his work in Delhi consisted of government, or at least Sprenger-approved 'commissions', Karim also embarked on some original compositions. However, few were actually published, or if published even fewer have survived. A particularly significant original venture which would have cast interesting light on his perceptions of his own society was a work entitled, *Ta'limu'n-nisa*

30 Al-Hariri (1054–1122), poet and philologist. His most famous work was his *Maqamat*, on which there have been more than 20 commentaries, notably al-Sharishi's. The French Orientalist, Silvestre de Sacy's 1822 edition drew the work both to the renewed attention of Arab scholars as well as Orientalists, and perhaps explains the *Maqamat*'s important place on the Delhi College curriculum in the 1840s. *Encyclopedia of Islam (EI)*, 2nd edn, vol. 3, pp. 221–2. In a letter to Sprenger from Agra, shortly after they had both left Delhi, Karim informed him that the printing of his *Maqamat* had just commenced, 10 May 1848. See 'Ek nadir', p. 164. Cf. Thomas Chenery (trans.), *The Assemblies of al Hariri translated from the Arabic*, vol. I, London, 1867; F. Steingass (trans.), vol. II, London, Williams and Northgate, 1898.

('Education of Women'), composed at a date when Muslim males had scarcely begun to consider the education of their womenfolk a suitable subject for discussion, let alone for action.[31] Yet if this seems a pioneering work, his own reference to the work in the 'History of Urdu Poets' (in the absence of any extant copy), suggests that his stance was conservative in the extreme. His eight 'lessons' for women consisted of two chapters on religious obligations (to gain knowledge of God, his Prophet and the truth of Islam), two chapters warning against useless practices and polytheism, the rest being on the respective duties of husbands and wives, organization of the household, management of servants, and finally, a list of 'don'ts' in marriage. There is no mention of 'book learning' of any kind in the 'contents', although this is not to say that he did not express any views on the subject in the substance of the book.[32] The choice of subjects for discussion suggests that this was no government 'commission', but we have no information on the circumstances of its composition. Since a later work he is said to have started on 'great Muslim women in history' does not seem to have been completed, we have no other sources for insights into his views on women and the family except to surmise that like some later Indian Muslim male authors, he was content to eulogize an ideal past and avoid any rethinking of gender relations in the present. That he wrote at all on this subject provides, however, a frustratingly significant insight into his temperament.

Karim listed a further six works he wrote or compiled before he left Delhi, to which Garcin de Tassy later added several more.[33] Most of these were either technical manuals on, for example, inheritance law, and medicine, or collections of Persian or Arabic poetry.[34] Clearly he could, and would, turn his hand to almost any kind of literary commission offered to him. But this, the most satisfactory period of Karim's career, came to an abrupt end when Sprenger, his patron and mentor, left Delhi in December 1847, first for Lucknow, to carry out a government project on cataloguing the

31 See Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998.

32 Karim, *Tarikh*, p. 470; cf. *Histoire*, II, pp. 168–9.

33 de Tassy, *Histoire*, II, pp. 168–72.

34 Eg. *Kitab-e daktari*, Delhi, n.p., 1847. The first volume Karim says he translated from an Egyptian edition of this French medical work while working 'in the hills' with Sprenger, who having medical qualifications, then confirmed its correctness. See Karim to Sprenger, Agra, 10 May 1848, 'Ek nadir', p. 164.

royal libraries of Awadh, and later for Calcutta, to be principal of the Calcutta Madrasa. Although he returned to Delhi for short periods, and remained the nominal principal of the Delhi College until the early 1850s, his new concerns and responsibilities left him little time for the Delhi translation and publication project. Delhi College would continue as a teaching institution until 1857, but most agree that it lost its momentum as an intellectual and literary centre with Sprenger's departure.

The Agra Stage

It was no coincidence that Karimu'd-Din also left Delhi within weeks of Sprenger's posting to Lucknow. In January 1848 he was appointed master of the second Urdu class in the Oriental department of the Agra Government College, where he was to remain for nearly 10 years. His correspondence with Sprenger suggests that he took this rather lowly post, remunerated by Rs 30 monthly (only 10 rupees more than the scholarships of his own pupils), solely in the expectation that Sprenger would assist him to some higher appointment, preferably the professorship in Arabic at the same college that he felt his Delhi record justified, and of which he never gave up hope.[35] It is tempting to assume that Sprenger used him for his own convenience in Delhi, and then never really exerted his considerable influence to see him promoted to a more prestigious and remunerative post, although he did continue initially to correct some of his draft publications, and there is evidence that they continued to discuss literary matters of mutual interest by letter.[36] On the other hand, Sprenger had many calls on

35 The 'Anglo-Oriental' government college at Agra deserves a study of its own. Karim was appointed on Rs 30 per month in January 1848; promoted to first Urdu teacher in February 1850, earning Rs 50. *GRPI/NWP* for 1847–8; 1849–50, Agra, Secundra Orphan Press, 1849; 1850. He was overlooked again for the considerably more lucrative (Rs 100) professorship of Arabic in 1852. All his letters to Sprenger in the period 1848–52 are concerned, *inter alia*, with his hope that Sprenger will help him to the Arabic post.

36 Karim to Sprenger, Agra, n.d. (end February 1851?) indicates that he had received help from Sprenger in correcting the draft for a second edition of the commentary on Hariri's *Maqamat*, 'Ek nadir', p. 171. In this letter Karim also brought Sprenger up to date on his current literary projects, including an Urdu-Hindi dictionary and a *Bagh o bahar* in both Hindi and Urdu that he was preparing for school use.

his patronage from other munshis who had worked with him on texts and expected to be favoured with teaching appointments. In the event, Sprenger recommended Ghulam 'Ali Akbar, also from Panipat, for the Agra Arabic post, explaining that while assisting him in cataloguing the Lucknow royal libraries he had noted that 'Ali Akbar, even though he had not yet completed his Delhi College studies, had qualities far beyond those of a mere copyist.[37] Unsurprisingly, Karim resented being overtaken by this seemingly more junior scholar. On balance, Karim's case seems to have deserved rather more of Sprenger's attention than it received but, in spite of some earlier very fulsome praise for him, and the continuation of some contact with him until at least 1852, Sprenger never again extended his patronage in Karim's direction. When 'Ali Akbar died very young in 1852, Sprenger again chose not to favour Karim for the newly vacant Arabic post. An opportunity to transfer to a *sarishtadar's* (head record keeper) office in the Punjab early in his Agra posting was lost because he was unable, apparently, to arrange transport to Lahore by the deadline.[38] Ill-fated he certainly felt himself to have been, and there is some poignancy in his admitting to Sprenger that, 'I make this same prayer after every *namaz*, that I should again be in his [Sprenger's] service'.[39]

Although there were many important similarities between the Delhi and the Agra colleges, some of which were also shared by some other Anglo-Oriental colleges in the North-Western Provinces, the differences between them are more significant for tracing and evaluating Karimu'd-Din's subsequent career. Arabic and Urdu were both taught at Agra, but its founders had considered that the likely catchment of students from a city now serving as 'an emporium of considerable trade' warranted more emphasis on Hindi, together with some Sanskrit.[40] Indeed, Karim commenced the study of Sanskrit as soon as he was posted there. Secondly, there was to

37 Sprenger praised 'Ali Akbar as, 'this talented industrious and conscientious young man'. A. Sprenger, *A Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Hindu'sta'ny Manuscripts of the Libraries of the King of Oudh*, vol. I, preface, pp. iii–iv. Another rival was Maulawi Sadidu'd-Din, son of Rashidu'd-Din, a prominent *'alim* (religious scholar) in Delhi, who already had a post in Delhi: his much better connections ensured Sprenger getting him the Arabic post he wanted in Calcutta, whereas the 'unconnected' Karim failed a second time. 'Ek nadir', pp. 176–7.

38 Karim to Sprenger, Agra, 10 May 1848, 'Ek nadir', pp. 165–9.

39 Ibid.

40 *GRPI/NWP*, 1849–50, Agra, 1850, p. 2.

be a strong emphasis, led by the principal, James Middleton, on practical science. Karim would not find his feet as easily here as he had in literary and historically inclined Delhi College, where the new interest in science was not as strongly directed towards practical application as in Agra.

This is not to say that Karim's Agra phase saw a complete drying up of his Delhi productivity: he certainly had many publications in this period.[41] Yet, apart from one notable exception, the list seems to reflect the different ethos and priorities of his new colonial paymasters in Agra. The exception, a work in the tradition of his earlier 'Delhi phase' compilations, drawing attention to the achievements of Muslim scholars 'in the past', was the Mughal poet Faizi's *Mauridu'l-kalim*, which he published in the original Arabic, giving explanations in Persian, from the Agra College Press.[42] It is not known whether this was part of a bid to show himself as worthy of the desired chair in Arabic, or was merely a leftover from his Delhi agenda. The work was advertised in the *Agra Government Gazette* in April 1850, but seems to have been his last contribution to this genre for at least a further 10 years. During most of his 'Agra phase' his publications reflected the practical, scientific thrust of his new institution, and not surprisingly, the new demands of teaching Urdu. He was drawn, in particular, into assisting with projects to translate science textbooks, notably an Urdu translation, entitled *Mufidu'l-'ulum*, of principal Middleton's syllabus of *Lessons in Natural Philosophy*.[43]

Demands for books on the teaching of the vernaculars, while he was in Agra, are reflected in the first of a long series of Urdu grammars he produced, later to be revised and republished in Lahore, when he was sarishtadar in the Punjab Government's textbook office. His *Qawa'idu'l-mubtadi* ('A Hindustani Grammar'),

41 de Tassy, *Histoire*, II, pp. 172–3.

42 *Mawaradu'l-kalim*, Agra, Agra College Press, 1850. See *Agra Government Gazette*, vol. 11, no. 18, 30 April 1850, p. 268, where its subject matter is described as 'Essays on Particular Subjects'.

43 James Middleton, *A Syllabus of the Lectures upon Experimental Philosophy delivered at the Agra College*, 3rd edn, London, Elder & Co., 1857, translated from an earlier edition by J.W. Beale, assisted by Karimu'd-Din, as *Mufidu'l-'ulum*, Agra, n.p., 1853. Another edition had the title *Miftau'l-'ulum* ('Key of Knowledge'). The next year Beale published *Bijli ki Dak* ('Electric Telegraph'), Agra, n.p., 1854. Karim was involved in the publication of a number of other textbooks in applied science.

first published in Agra in the early 1850s, and succeeded by several rapid editions, earned somewhat back-handed praise from a hard taskmaster, H.S. Reid, director of public instruction (DPI) of the North-Western Provinces. Reid, in condemning an alternative *Compendious Grammar of the Oordoo Language* as 'obscure in its brevity', deemed it 'inferior, as a manual of grammar, to Mouluvee Kureem-ood-deen's 'Kuwaid-ool-moobtudee', which is read in Tahsili schools'.[44] A second such textbook Karim published about this time was *Muzihu'l-lisan*, an Arabic grammar in Urdu.[45] There are other hints that Reid, who lacked Sprenger's depth of Oriental scholarship, did recognize Karim as more learned than some of the other run-of-the-mill translators the Education Department employed, and he continued to republish Karim's texts after he had left Agra.[46] Yet in such reports on schoolbooks, however favourable the notice, can be traced the descent of Sprenger's once right-hand collaborator to mundane tasks that certainly did not offer him the satisfaction of the beautifully produced tazkiras of poets he had worked on five years earlier in Delhi. It seems that he was sidelined even within this lowly school textbook industry throughout the 1850s, as the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society continued to receive most of the commissions, and even though the Committee on Vernacular Works sat at the seat of government in Agra, the Agra College press does not seem to have built up any particular reputation for the quality of its own translations.

It seems that Karim was merely marking time in Agra, unfulfilled in his teaching and failing to establish a particularly strong rapport with any of his British colleagues. He mentions an introduction to one Dr John Murray, chief medical officer at the new Agra Medical College who, he hoped, would help him complete the translation of a medical work. In general, however, the British officers in Agra did not display the interest shown by their Delhi

44 *Qawa'idu'l-mubtadi*, 3rd edn, Agra, Matba 'Madrasa-i shahr, 1858; H.S. Reid, 'note', Agra, 18 May 1855.

45 Many editions from Agra in the 1850s. Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire*, II, p. 172.

46 For example, Reid recommended that Karim should revise a *Biography of Eminent Men*, previously unsatisfactorily translated by a well-respected mathematician at Delhi College, Master Ram Chandra. Karim had also done translations of the *Gulistan* and *Bostan* of Sa'adi for the use of *tahsili* schools. Unlike many of the other Indian teachers, Karim always received satisfactory reports on his teaching from the college examiners; e.g. *GRPI/NWP*, 1848–9, p. 55, 1850–1, p. 21.

colleagues in Islamic literature for its own sake.[47] If they did show interest, it was increasingly, in the 1850s, from an evangelical perspective. Indeed, by the mid-1850s, he was probably becoming concerned by activities in the city following the concentration in Agra of Christian missionary preaching and publication of a kind particularly hostile to Islam, which began to disturb its Muslim scholarly class.[48] Karimu'd-Din was not directly involved, it seems, but his younger brother, 'Imadu'd-Din, supposedly under his guardianship as a student in the Agra College, chose at this stage to take a direct part in refuting the missionaries, with results that Karim could not have ignored. Indeed, on one occasion 'Imadu'd-Din caused a scene in the royal mosque at Agra while Karim was showing two British education officers around the building. Karim's inner feelings as tension mounted in Agra in the mid-1850s are not known. He seems to have resigned from his teaching post at some point shortly before the outbreak of the regimental mutinies in early 1857, and was thus not faced by the insinuations of 'disloyalty' that were directed at his younger brother, 'Imadu'd-Din's, abandonment of his own teaching post in the college when mutiny turned into civil rebellion in Agra.[49]

The Lahore Stage

The last phase of Karimu'd-Din's career, after he moved to the Punjab shortly before the rebellion, was the longest, lasting from his mid-30s until retirement, aged about 55, in the 1870s. But it was also the least eventful, in the sense that, having obtained a fairly responsible, if unchallenging post, in charge of the government textbook depot in Lahore, he then advanced by slow stages up the

47 John Murray, apart from his medical duties, was responsible for some of the earliest photographs taken in Agra.

48 Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, especially ch. 8.

49 British officers surmised that after 5 July, when the rebels attacked Agra, burning the college, 'Imadu'd-Din 'joined his brother Kurreem Ooddin who... subsequently obtained promotion to a zillah visitorship in the Punjab'. Appendix 'B' to H.S. Reid, *Report on the State of Popular Education in the North Western Provinces for 1856–57*, Benares, Medical Hall Press, 1859. A *qissa* Karim later published in Lahore extolled the virtue of 'obedience to government', one protagonist commenting on regimental disloyalty in 1857, 'you have seen what happened to them'. *Qissa-e Punjab Singh*, Lahore, Government Press, 1864, p. 10.

rungs of the schools' inspectorate ladder to retire, to unanimous praise from his superiors, as a district inspector based in Amritsar.[50] One of his British superiors described him, at this point, as 'modest and retiring...an officer who has grown old in the service of the Department, and contributed not a little to its progress.'[51] What significance, if any, can be drawn from this finally very worthy, but somewhat marginalized and very subordinate stage in his scholarly career?

During his years in Lahore in the early 1860s Karim had seemed to be on the point of recovering the kind of relationship with his British employers that had proved so intellectually fruitful 20 years earlier in Delhi, under the aegis of Aloys Sprenger. His new patron was Abraham Fuller, seconded out of the army to be DPI for the Punjab, and like Sprenger, an enthusiast for Arabic and Persian learning, who quickly recognized Karim's own learning and skills, and the ways they could be utilized for his own projects.[52] Symptomatic of this was Fuller's commissioning of Karim to translate three panegyrics from Persian into Urdu, adding his own commentary. They had been written in the sixteenth century by the poet Zuhuri in honour of the Deccani sultan, Ibrahim 'Adil Shah. Two of these were published in Lahore in 1861.[53] Another manuscript they prepared in tandem, although publication was delayed until after Fuller's death, was a selection of Arabic poetry entitled *Sullam al-adab*, with an Urdu translation and notes, intended for students preparing for the entrance examination to the University

50 Starting in Jallandar, he was employed successively as DPI Fuller's personal sarishtadar, promoted to deputy inspector in the Lahore educational circle, then district schools inspector, Amritsar. Punjab Education Proceedings and Reports, 1860–70.

51 C.W.W. Alexander, Report on the Lahore circle, in *Report on Popular Education in the Punjab...for the year, 1868–69*, Lahore, Albion Press, 1869, p. 99. Karim reached the 'glass ceiling' for Indian subordinate education officers in 1871–2, earning Rs 150 per month (cf. Rs 30 at his first post in Agra College in the late 1840s).

52 Abraham Richard Fuller, Royal Artillery, Bengal. Appointed 1845; captain 1858; major 1865; drowned August 1867. See OIOC biographical index. His contributions to scholarship included translations of some medieval Persian chronicles commissioned by H.M. Elliot, notably the first English translation of the Shah Jahan Nama of 'Inayat Khan.

53 Karimu'd-Din, *Tashhir-e Zuhuri: A Commentary on the First of the Sih Nasr of Zuhuri*, Lahore, Matba 'Sarkari, 1861; *Takrim-e Zuhuri: A Commentary on the Second of the Sih Nasr*, Lahore, Matba 'Sarkari, 1861.

of Calcutta.[54] Although there were very few other similar returns to the Islamic literary and historic past before Fuller's untimely sudden death in 1867, some of the more mundane 'textbook commissions' that Fuller gave Karim reveal in their prefaces, or sometimes in their subtexts, the rapport between these two men, and some hints of the common 'values' they were seeking to transmit to young children through new ventures with the vernacular school curriculum.[55]

When Fuller died, Karim probably experienced the kind of loss he had felt on Sprenger's sudden removal from the Delhi College. Colonel W.R.M. Holroyd, Fuller's successor as DPI, is famed for his resurrection of the holding of musha'iras in Lahore, albeit clearly now for British influenced, didactic purposes, consciously directed towards 'moral instruction'.[56] Yet although Holroyd praised Karim's performance in the schools' inspectorate there is no evidence of any special relationship of the kind Karim had been developing with Fuller. His services were utilized from time to time by the Hungarian, Gottlieb W. Leitner, the leading Orientalist scholar in Lahore from 1864 to 1887 and principal, successively, of the city's Government and Oriental colleges. But Leitner now had many other younger scholars at his beck and call, including his own graduates, at a time when Karim was anyway posted in Amritsar, removed from the centre of growing intellectual activity in Lahore. While still in Lahore, he had served as a member of the education sub-committee of the Anjuman-e Punjab that Leitner had encouraged in the city. This 'Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in the Punjab' was reminiscent of the societies and periodicals founded by Boutros and Sprenger in Delhi College, in which Karim had been involved 20 years earlier, but he does not seem to have played any significant role in the Anjuman's subsequent activities. The most significant work in which he did

54 A.R. Fuller and Karimu'd-Din, *Sullam al-adab*, Lahore, 1869. Further editions, Bareilly, 1870; Lahore, Matba 'Sarkari, 1901.

55 A Persian work he abridged, the *Intikhab-e tuhfat al-Iraqain*, from Khaqani's poem describing the pilgrimage, giving a life of the author and his own commentary, was published shortly before Fuller's death, Lahore, Aftab-i Panjab, 1867.

56 On the Lahore musha'iras in the 1870s, see C.M. Naim, 'Mughal and English Patronage of Urdu Poetry: A Comparison', in Barbara Stoler Miller (ed.), *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, New Delhi and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992; Frances Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1994, pp. 34–9.

assist Leitner was the latter's *Sinin-e Islam*, a history of Arabia and Islamic literature, compiled 'for the use of Maulawis' whom Leitner deemed to be all 'more or less, ignorant of some of the most prominent facts of Arabian History and Literature'. Yet when Karim replaced Muhammad Husain Azad as Leitner's assistant in the writing of the second, and much more substantial volume, he received no credit at all in the preface. In contrast, Leitner, while disparaging earlier Orientalist translations done only with 'a Dictionary and a docile Munshi', had fulsomely attributed to Azad 'any elegance which its [volume one's] Urdu style may possess.[57] Meanwhile Azad had obtained the post of professor of Arabic in Lahore that Karim had earlier so yearned for in Agra.

Sidelined, it seems, by officialdom from more intellectually demanding tasks during his final years of service, the stream of officially commissioned school textbooks Karim had continued to compile are nevertheless revealing of his own values and interests. First, although the subject matter was usually prescribed by DPI Fuller and his successors, and much of his output anyway consisted of translations, Fuller himself remarked on Karim's capacity for 'original' writing, commenting in 1864 that, 'Mouvie Kurreem-u-deen, my Serishtadar, has written a couple of original tales in Urdu, which are likely to prove very popular'.[58] One of these was Karim's *Khat-e taqdir*, a title variously translated by Garcin de Tassy as, 'la ligne du destin' and 'l'écrit du destin'.[59] The first edition, published in Lahore in 1863, was followed by a second a year later, and a third in 1865, after which, it seems, the book was virtually ignored until a new edition appeared in India almost exactly a century later. Blumhardt's catalogue of Hindustani printed books describes the first edition as 'a moral and instructive story with prefatory remarks on the necessity of a good education'.[60]

57 G.W. Leitner, *Sinin-e Islam...wasti istafada-e maulawiyon ki*, subtitled in English: 'Being a Sketch of the History and Literature of Muhammadanism and their place in universal history: for the use of Maulawis', 2 vols, Lahore, 'Indian Public Opinion' Press, 1871, 1876.

58 Capt. A.R. Fuller, *Report on Popular Education in the Punjab...for the Year 1861–62*, Lahore, Punjabee Press, 1864, p. 72.

59 Garcin de Tassy, 'Treizième Discours', 7 December 1863, reprinted in *La Langue et la Littérature Hindoustanies de 1850 a 1869*, 2nd edn, Paris, Librairie Oriental de Maisonneuve, 1874, p. 224; *Histoire*, II, p. 175.

60 J.F. Blumhardt, *Catalogue of Hindustani Printed Books*, London, Trustees of the British Museum, 1889, p. 162. The Bodleian Library has a copy of the second, 1865, edition.

Garcin de Tassy characterized it as a 'conte moral en prose'.[61] The few modern commentators who have mentioned it treat the *Khat* as a *tamsil* (allegory) in the *qissa* tradition, notwithstanding a claim for its status as 'the first Urdu novel', on the ground mainly, that it preceded Nazir Ahmad's *Miratu'l-'arus* by some seven years.[62] It has not, however, received more than cursory attention in any of the standard or recent histories of Urdu literature, and in spite of its contemporary allusions and reformist message, seems to bear few of the marks of the Urdu novels that succeeded it.[63] Karim himself referred to it variously as a qissa or a *kahani*.

Whether or not Karim proposed this work to Fuller, or vice versa, it certainly ended up on the curriculum of Punjab's schools in the 1860s, being used in some classes, it seems, merely for testing the pupils' translations from Urdu to English.[64] Yet, however it was actually used in classrooms, the author's own intention was clearly didactic in a much wider sense, aiming to convey in a parabolical mode the moral values appropriate to inculcate in the transitory state of the recently annexed Punjab, by when it was felt that Hariri's *Maqamat* no longer served the purposes of the fully-fledged colonial state.[65] In the preface of the *Khat* Karim explained that his intention was to abandon the well-worn path of earlier generations of storytellers, involving countless marvellous happenings, in order to write, in 'pure and simple Urdu', a moral tale that would be of positive benefit to its readers and hearers, especially to the younger generation in whom he hoped to stimulate 'a desire for the new writing and for writing real subjects'.[66] He was at pains to insist, however, that he would not abandon the 'romantic' context in which all previous qissas were set, for otherwise it would arouse no more interest than a newspaper and would be unread. The finished work still seems quintessentially 'fantastic' compared with the kind of more realistic, but still didactic, Urdu novels that began to appear within

61 Garcin de Tassy, 'Treizième Discours', p. 224.

62 Mahmud Ilahi, *Urdu ka Phela Navil*, preface; Siddique, *Maulawi Karimu'd-Din*, disputes this view, pp. 242–63.

63 Cf. 'The Development of the Modern Novel', ch. 6 in Ralph Russell, *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature: A Select History*, London, Zed, 1992.

64 Diamond, 'Developing Indigenous and European Knowledge', p. 186.

65 Government ai ' 'or a second edition of Karim's version of the *Maqamat* had been refused even though the government of Agra had aided the first 1849 edn.

66 Preface to the *Khat-e Taqdir*, Lahore, Matba 'Sarkari, 1864, pp. 2–5.

a few years.[67] What is more significant for present purposes, however, was the author's own declared didactic purpose, considerably influenced as it almost certainly was, by the agenda for Punjabi schoolchildren of the commissioner of the work, DPI Abraham Fuller.

The tale is told in the voice of an educated young man from a humble background, struggling to decide the path he should follow in life. Depicted as *mastana* (intoxicated), he is aroused from his stupefaction by being taken by his former mentor, *faizan* (abundance) to the court of the *mulke-e taqdir* (queen of destiny), where he is subjected to numerous pressures and temptations from various allegorical figures presented to him as 'judgment' (*tadbir*), 'wisdom' (*chuturai*), and 'intelligence' (*'aql*). Negative goals such as unearned wealth (*daulat*) and conspicuous consumption, represented by the ostentation of an Oriental court and its slaves, are in the end foresworn for the pursuit of knowledge. The puritanical theme has resonances of his earlier comment in Delhi on poetry as profligate time-wasting, although paradoxically, the prose narrative is interspersed with verses from the Mughal-era poets, Mir, Sauda, and Momin. If the format seems reminiscent of the same literary genres Karim was claiming to renounce, part of the new-style didacticism consisted in drawing to his pupil-readers' attention the educational opportunities offered by the new colonial regime. Another purpose of the foreign travel and the learning of languages he advocated through this allegory, was to reawaken in India the thirst for knowledge for its own sake, of the kind that had enabled, he thought, the kind of early intellectual exchanges between Indians, Greeks, and Arabs he so much admired in the past, and drew on in his own writing.

If he was deliberately intending to reject older forms of story-telling, Karim also tried his hand at some more traditional forms of moral teaching, by retelling in simple Urdu prose and poetry some of the well-known tales familiar to all Punjabis in the very qissa form he chose to criticize in the preface to the *Khat-e taqdir*. He thus retold in Urdu a Punjabi tale as *Qissa-e Punjab Singh*, stressing the contrasts it invoked between 'good' and 'bad' qualities through

67 In 1868 William Muir, newly appointed lieutenant governor of NWP, instituted a prize competition for prose compositions in Urdu of a suitably didactic nature and avoiding 'anything obnoxious to morality', to which some of Karim's contemporaries, among them Nazir Ahmad, responded.

historical and legendary anecdotes, but adding some recent and timely examples, such as the example of 'loyalty' in 1857, mentioned above, to illustrate the 'obedience' all owed to the 'fatherly' *sarkar* of the day and to the 'supreme *badshah*', or universal god, albeit known by different names in the various religious traditions.[68]

For younger children the moral messages were even more directly told in, for example, his *Pand-e sudmand* (moral maxims, described in the catalogue as 'proverbs and maxims for the young'), which listed 150 brief maxims to be absorbed and acted upon by the pupils, in the hope that they would thereby become 'very intelligent and lead a peaceful and comfortable life in this world'.[69] Examples ranged from a religiously neutral reminder, 'Before anything else, recognize the God who has created you', to advice on human relations such as, 'Avoid the company of stupid and ignorant people'. In a brief preface Karim referred to the Greek sources he had drawn on, but mentioned specifically that 100 of the maxims were derived from the advice given to his son by the legendary pre-Islamic sage, Luqman.[70]

Taken together, at their various levels, the novel, the qissas and the proverbs, have a common denominator in urging universal moral values, drawing from Greek, Arab and local sources, but reflecting also Karim's understandings of the standards of conduct he understood the officers of the DPI now wanted to inculcate in the Punjab. His school texts were thus deemed acceptable to readers of any religious persuasion, being 'non-sectarian' in the mode Holroyd prescribed at the 1874 musha'ira, and conceived in an idiom familiar, either by direct observation or through earlier literary references, to any Punjabi reader. Some of his publications of this period, such as his translations of, and commentaries on,

68 *Qissa-e Punjab Singh*, 'Disobedience', pp. 10–16.

69 In many editions, including, Lahore, Government Press, 1864; 1866; 1876. Although most of these editions came from government presses, and the collection had been carried out on the DPI's order, one edition, prefixed with the 'bismillah', may have been requested by one of the Punjabi *anjumans* which now ran private schools for Muslim children.

70 For the transmission of a composite Luqman tradition as the 'Aesop of the Arabs' into Turkish and Persian literature and folklore (and by extension into north India) see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, vol. 5, Leiden Brill, pp. 811–13. Garcin de Tassy thought Karim may have drawn also from Thomas Roebuck's *A Collection of Proverbs, and Practical Phrases in the Persian and Hindoostanee Languages*, Calcutta, Hindoostanee Press, 1824.

Hafiz's *Diwan*, and Sa'adi's *Gulistan* and *Bostan*,[71] still seem to evoke the Persian cultural context of his own youth, as did his work on *insha* (composition) which, if ostensibly merely teaching children and functionaries the skills of letter-writing in Urdu, in effect helped to carry from pre-rebellion Delhi to late nineteenth century Lahore, the discreetly nuanced *adab* values of Mughal courtly culture.[72] On the other hand, his few extant original works seem to mark a more deliberate attempt to accommodate to the now rapidly changing colonial milieu, and in particular, to the norms of conduct valued by the Education Department.

These findings might be further illustrated by reference to the subtexts of many of Karimu'd-Din's other textbook enterprises in the 1860s and 1870s, by when he was considered one of the Punjab government's most prolific and reliable munshis, producing new style geographies and histories as well as more traditional texts on insha and grammar. Some of these have been examined previously elsewhere and will not be reconsidered in detail here. Jeffrey Diamond's recent study is particularly valuable for the tracing of changes to the Punjab's educational curriculum in which Karim and other munshis played important parts, its particular emphasis being the role of works on grammar and insha in the evolution of Urdu and the emergence of a new class, literate in the Urdu now required for service and other employment.[73]

Karim generally maintained a very low profile, but caused a momentary storm in a teacup, rather than a real crisis, through the publication in 1863 of a history of India, the *Waqi'at-e Hind*, that had been commissioned by Abraham Fuller for use in vernacular schools.[74] This incident was, however, very revealing of his

71 *Histoire*, II. p. 177.

72 Garcin de Tassy regarded Karim's *Insha-e Urdu*, Lahore, Matba 'Sarkari, 1862 as providing rare information,'sought vainly elsewhere', on the exact protocol for addressing 21 degrees of family relationships, as well as many other relationships, including functionaries such as munshis and pandits. 'Treizième Discours', pp. 222–3.

73 For discussion of Karim's texts on grammar and dictionaries, as well as insha, see Diamond, 'Developing Indigenous and European Knowledge', especially pp. 174–83. Grammars included a revision of his Agra text, the *Qawa'idu'l-mubtadi*, but also some newly commissioned works such as *Tashilu'l-qawa'id* / 'Simplification of [grammatical] Rules', Lahore, Matba 'Sarkari, 1863.

74 For Karim's role in the 'history textbook controversy' see Powell, 'History Textbooks', pp. 91–133.

perceived place in the Punjab's educational hierarchy, for when views he expressed in the 'ancient India' section of the textbook appeared to question the divinity of Rama, a British education officer objected on behalf of supposed 'Hindu' readers, from whom there had in fact been no adverse comment, requesting the omission of these and some other religiously 'sensitive' passages. In the enquiry that followed at the Government of Punjab level, not only did the DPI, Karim's patron, Abraham Fuller, give him full support, but when the lieutenant governor finally ordered the excision of the reference to Rama, there was no criticism of Karimu'd-Din who continued to find favour with his superiors in the education service. In fact, as the stance he took in his novel, the *Khat-e taqdir*, and in many of his school texts that invoked various aspects of appropriate adab, akhlaq, and appropriate 'moral' behaviour for Punjabi schoolchildren show, Karim was highly unlikely to have deliberately set out to threaten the neutral balance he otherwise always advocated for adjusting successfully in the new colonial context.

Karimu'd-Din's Significance

Study of the Indian scholars associated with the Delhi College in the pre-1857 period usually focuses on that institution as a cradle for men who subsequently proceeded to make a mark in the public literary or educational sphere, and whose names are now remembered as the moulders of later nineteenth-century Urdu literary culture. Among those who had also studied in Delhi College Muhammad Husain Azad was perhaps the most outstanding contributor to Urdu literature. There were also some pupils and teachers who are remembered for some particular scholarly achievements that they too continued into the post-rebellion period, but whose upwardly mobile careers seemed thwarted by the closure in 1857 of the college that had nurtured them, even though they subsequently managed to obtain subordinate posts in the education service. 'Master' Ram Chandra, the mathematician, and Maulawi Zaka Ullah, both historian and mathematician, were examples of this category. Thirdly, a number, and probably the majority who were active in the college in the 1840s and 1850s, achieved no particular standing at all in the 1860s and 1870s,

ending their days as undervalued textbook hacks and copyists. Judging by the silence about him in most later works of literary and historical criticism, Karimu'd-Din seems to belong to this last category. This study has shown, however, that by placing Karim's 'Delhi stage' as student, writer, and publisher in the longer perspective of his subsequent low-key activities in Agra and the Punjab, his life cycle is instructive in a number of ways significant to understanding some facets of the Indo-Muslim scholarly world of north India in the mid-nineteenth century period of transition.

First, Karim's career presents a particularly good opportunity to examine in micro the reciprocal relationships that developed between some influential Orientalist scholars and their often anonymous subaltern translators, copyists, and informants, some of whom were admitted, on rare occasion, to full partnership and collaboration in the literary endeavours of the European scholars in question. This approach is currently topical, an extreme case of creating an alter ego being illustrated very convincingly in Kathleen Taylor's recent study of the success of Sir John Woodroffe, supposedly the 'author' of the 'Tantric Texts' published under his name, in obscuring from his readers that his Indian friend and fellow initiate in Tantric practice, Atal Bihari Ghosh, was in fact responsible for many of the works usually attributed to him.[75] If much less dramatic, Karim's role as subordinate partner in a scholarly partnership with a European is particularly useful, in that he developed two such relationships in two different contexts, and over a span of more than 20 years (1845–68). Both his patrons, Aloys Sprenger and Abraham Fuller, might be considered mavericks, if not on the scale of John Woodroffe, the Tantric initiate, in a colonial service noted generally for its professional conformity.[76] They were both 'out of line' with Company and Raj policy, at the particular times they served, notably in favouring a neo-Orientalist programme to revive the teaching and study of Islamic scholarship in tandem with the introduction of Western learning, to be implemented through the use of Urdu rather than English, in higher as well as in school education. Karim, and some other Indian students who

75 Kathleen Taylor, *Sir John Woodroffe, Tantra and Bengal: 'An Indian Soul in a European Body?'*, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press Ltd., 2001.

76 Sprenger broke the service code on several occasions and was finally dismissed from British service; Fuller antagonized his colleagues on several issues on which he was deemed 'out of line'.

were trained in the pre-1857 'Anglo-Oriental' colleges of the north-west, were useful tools in such a programme. Both of his mentors respected his abilities, but both relationships proved transitory, and highly frustrating for Karim himself, when he seemingly outlived his usefulness to Sprenger, and when Fuller's sudden death left him without an influential supporter in the Punjab. Unsatisfactory though such brief relationships proved to the subordinate partner, the correspondence and published and unpublished texts that resulted in the late 1840s in Delhi, and again in the 1860s in Lahore, have opened a window into the workings of a hitherto scarcely noticed process of collaborative scholarship. As a result, Karim's voice, if heard only indirectly through the education records, speaks more directly to us through his brief autobiographical writings and, with careful attention to separating subtext from 'colonial speak', can sometimes be heard distinctly, especially in the prefaces to his prolific and varied literary output.

Secondly, Karim's career as a translator, commentator, and writer allows entry, via a hitherto neglected alley, into the presses, textbook godowns, libraries, and classrooms of Delhi, Agra, and Lahore where the process of knowledge transmission from Arabic, Persian, and English into Urdu not only took place during his lifetime, but was affected by his own input. Notwithstanding some earlier activity in Calcutta and Madras, and some simultaneous developments in Bombay, these north-western cities and their colleges were the initiators of a programme which intentionally, both in principle and in practice, aimed to use an Indian vernacular as the medium of cultural and scientific exchange. There were other educational institutions in the north-west where this was also happening, notably the Sanskrit College at Benares. Karim, however, was a significant agent in the process both in Delhi, where it started, with the emphasis as much on higher level scholarly interaction as on lower level school and college textbook production, and in Lahore, where it resumed in the 1860s. By the Lahore stage, when the agenda had been reduced to the school textbook end of the market, the ambitions of Abraham Fuller, if not cut short, might, with Karim's assistance, have also restored the more scholarly agenda. As it was, when the arrival of a third neo-Orientalist, Gottlieb Leitner, revived some of the earlier objectives, especially the emphasis on Urdu, Karimu'd-Din was soon afterwards marginalized from the literary centre court.

Finally, what of Karimu'd-Din the man, rather than the intermediary or assistant? A motif of this study has been the 'might-have-beens' of his career in British service, which because of his necessarily 'begging letters' to Sprenger pleading for preferment, tend to caste him as victim of the slings and arrows of both his employers and his Indian rivals. In telling us in his autobiographical fragment of his grandfather's miscalculations about the British and his failure to pursue his own best pragmatic interests, was there also a message about himself? Certain incidents seem to suggest this, notably the failure to get himself to the Punjab when lucrative employment was first offered. Nonetheless, overall, he accommodated himself to multiple, if not actually outrageous misfortunes with remarkable good judgment, ensuring continuity of government employment and the respect of his employers, albeit on a very modest salary, from the late 1840s to the 1870s. It is not possible from the sources available at present to resolve certain enigmas in his personality: a citer of other people's poetry, a compiler of tazkiras of poetry, and a hospitable host of musha'iras, yet he professed to regard poetry as the resort only of time-wasters, like the prodigals in his own *Khat-e taqdir*. How far was such a stance, along with much of the moralistic and universalistic subtext in his writings, really reflecting his European employers' agendas, imbibed during his student days in Delhi College, rather than his own voice? Frances Pritchett has reminded us that the 'psychological truth' behind whether poetry in the colonial context was 'written to order' is 'surely impossible to disentangle'.[77] According to hints in his own writings, he was seemingly a pious Sunni Muslim with a very inclusive attitude to other religions, but how did he really react when the whole of his immediate family, led by the brother he had educated, converted to Christianity and became pillars of the Punjab's new Christian community?[78] Finally,

77 Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, p. 39. Cf. Naim's emphasis on 'the effect of a [colonial] patronage which on the one hand claimed to seek public good, as opposed to private satisfaction, and on the other hand had powerful means to disseminate its preferences on a scale that not even a Grand Mughal could have indulged in'. Naim, 'Mughal and English Patronage', p. 274.

78 Avril A. Powell, '"Pillar of a New Faith": Christianity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Punjab from the Perspective of a Convert from Islam', in Robert Eric Frykenberg (ed.), *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500*, Grand Rapids, Cambridge, London, 2003, especially, pp. 230–1.

and most significant for this paper, how original a scholar might he have proved had he not been diverted into munshi-like mundane translation tasks from the higher path he had first set himself within the Delhi College world of scholarship, where his greatest literary achievements, the tazkiras of poets, were accomplished. Yet, from another perspective, perhaps the grounding he received in Delhi, particularly from the Delhi College and from Sprenger, was actually the making of a man who, in spite of personal disappointments, then made an important if still unrecognized contribution to the Delhi College cultural phenomenon and to its aftermath in some other parts of north-west India. Without any doubt Maulawi Karimu'd-Din was more than a mere munshi, but certainly in his own estimation, and in that of some of his apprasiers, something also of a scholar manqué.

8

Mohan Lal Kashmiri (1812–77)

An Initial Student of Delhi English College

Michael H. Fisher

The 'New Road' of English Education at Delhi College[1]

In 1828, Delhi College added a new course of study in English language, literature, and science, creating a space where ambitious Indian students could Anglicize in pursuit of advancement through service to the British. A leading figure behind this new English-model education, Charles E. Trevelyan (1807–86), intended this as 'ultra radicalism...an entire change', since it not only introduced a new British-style curriculum in English-medium but also had Hindu and Muslim students study together as classmates.[2] While the students who joined the first class at Delhi

1 C.E. Trevelyan in his *Treatise on the Means of Communicating the Learning and Civilization of Europe to India*, Calcutta, 1834, p. 9, cited in Henny Sender, 'Kashmiri Pandits and the Culture of Delhi', in R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Delhi Through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture, and Society*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 324–5.

2 Trevelyan, letter to Committee of the Calcutta School Book Society, Calcutta, January 1834 in C.E. Trevelyan, *et al.*, *Application of the Roman Alphabet to All the Oriental Languages*, Serampore, Serampore Press, 1834, pp. 3–30. See also Margrit Pernau, 'Delhi College', in Mushirul Hasan and Margrit Pernau (eds), *C.F.*

English College faced ostracism from their own communities, six of them persisted and eventually gained prominent positions under the British. Yet, their standing as intermediaries between the white British Christian colonizers and the various peoples of India alienated them to differing degrees from both. Nonetheless, over time, a growing number of their peers followed their footsteps. This chapter considers Mohan Lal Kashmiri (1812–77), in his day perhaps the most well-known member of this first class at Delhi English College, demonstrating the dynamics of this educational innovation and its enduring effects.

During Mohan Lal's controversial career, he rose and fell further than the others of his Delhi English College class-fellows. He was the first to work for the British, joining the particularly high-stakes political and diplomatic branch of the administration. There, he deployed the skills and lessons imparted both by the British teachers at Delhi College as well as those Persianate ones infused by his Kashmiri Pandit family, which had long adapted to service to the Mughals. More fully than his classmates, he endured formal religious and social excommunication by his Brahmin community, despite his protestations that he had neither become Christian nor even, to that point, shared food with Christians or Muslims. Indeed, he never converted to Christianity, although he evidently adopted Shi'i inclinations. When most of his British employers abandoned him during his captivity in Afghanistan, only his Delhi English College classmate, Mir Shahamat 'Ali, offered the ransom to redeem him. Later, he proceeded with Shahamat 'Ali to England, and there modelled a public relations campaign to gain honours and economic advancement. In London, he published autobiographical and historical books displaying his accomplishments and advocating his political positions. Due to his public writings against British 'forward imperialism' in Afghanistan, Bayly calls him 'India's first modern anti-imperialist'.[3] Yet, in addition to

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Andrews and Zakaullah of Delhi, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003; Narayani Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires, 1803–1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1981, especially, pp. 5–8, 17 and Gail Minault, 'Sayyid Ahmad Dehlavi and the "Delhi Renaissance",' in Frykenberg, *Delhi*, pp. 287–98.

3 C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 232.

Mohan Lal's particular politics, his lofty social pretensions, extensive demands for fulfilment of British financial and moral promises, and vociferous participation in public political discourse in London all offended British officials in India. Following his return to India, they marginalized him.

Mohan Lal (Fig. 8.1) thus formed the vanguard of new-model Anglicized Indian civil administrators that would expand over the following century. Not just Mohan Lal's classmates and contemporaries, but later generations of Indians in his intermediary position, including Jawaharlal Nehru, both openly admired his accomplishments and also shared his pain of cultural and social estrangement from both Britons and other Indians.[4] Like him, they frequently felt the frustration of their consequent dependence on and, often, betrayal by their British employers. They also suffered deracinization and distancing from their natal communities. The Anglicized Indian intellectual's dilemma of emulation of the West, but often racial alienation by it, continues until today, as some scholars have fruitfully explored.[5] Such situations created what Naipaul and Bhabha call 'mimic men', Indians who emulated the British but, by virtue of colonial racism, could '*emphatically*' not become them.[6] Thus, the creation of Delhi English College represented a significant departure for many north Indian service elite families.

4 Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Foreword', in Hari Ram Gupta, *Life and Work of Mohan Lal Kashmiri, 1812–1877*, Lahore, Minerva Book Shop, 1943.

5 Dipak Kumar Aich, *Emergence of Modern Bengali Elite*, Calcutta, Minerva Associates, 1995; Manu Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003; Partha Chatterjee, *Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999; Nigel Crook (ed.), *Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000; Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *History of Education in Modern India*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2000; David Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979; Sulochana Krishnamoorthi, *Modern Education and its Impact on Society in Bombay*, Mumbai, Himalaya, 1999; Nita Kumar, *Lessons from Schools*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1999; B.N. Naidu, *Intellectual History of Colonial India: Mysore, 1831–1920*, Jaipur, Rawat, 1996; Gerald Studdert-Kennedy, *The Colonial Transaction of Missionary Education: Christ, History and Shakespeare at the Madras Christian College, 1860–1940*, Cambridge, North Atlantic Missiology Project, 1997; Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989.

6 V.S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, London, Readers Union, 1968; Homi K. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man', *Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994, pp. 85–92.



Trevelyan and the Foundation of Delhi English College

Charles E. Trevelyan's own career in India and educational philosophy reflected the broad transition in the British colonial administration and policy from 'Orientalism' to 'Anglicization'. In July 1828, Trevelyan joined the Delhi College Committee. He was 21 years old, and had recently assumed his appointment as assistant resident, Delhi. His efforts to reform and expand the college supported those of J.H. Taylor, its superintendent and the secretary of its governing committee. These men argued strenuously that only intercommunal education from 'the pure fount of English literature', would enable India to make 'headway against the impenetrable barrier of habit and prejudice backed by religious feeling'.[7] Consequently, Delhi College added courses in English on an experimental basis.

At first, Delhi English College struggled for educational materials and other resources. They began with 'a few old fashioned English spelling books... with difficulty procured from the neighboring [British] stations'.[8] The College Committee diverted funds from a Rs 170,000 endowment given by Nawab E'timadu'd-Daula, chief minister of Awadh, against the repeated protests of the donor that this was exclusively intended for traditional Persian and Arabic study. This money, however, enabled, Delhi College in 1829 to expand the experimental courses into a separate English College, also known as the Delhi Institute or the Delhi English Institution.

The Committee developed a grand plan that began with the male elite of Delhi but then intended to effect the complete uplift and reformation of the 'uneducated and half barbarous people' of India generally.[9] The college would form the basis for

7 Trevelyan, *Treatise*, p. 9 cited in Sender, 'Kashmiri Pandits', pp. 324–5. See also Charles E. Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, London, Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, Longmans, 1838; Humphrey Trevelyan, *The India we Left: Charles Trevelyan*, London, Macmillan, 1972; Raleigh Trevelyan, *Golden Oriole*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1987; J.F. Hilliker, 'Charles Edward Trevelyan as an Educational Reformer', *Canadian Journal of History*, 9 (1974), pp. 275–91 and 'Trevelyan and the Reform of Indian Education', *Indo-British Review*, 6, 1974, pp. 69–78.

8 Charles Edward Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, London, Longmans, 1838, pp. 110–11.

9 Delhi Committee to General Committee of Public Instruction, 12 February 1829, cited in Hilliker, 'Charles Edward Trevelyan', p. 281.

an India-wide new-model educational system of preparatory schools in every district and a network of regional colleges. The Committee envisioned

> ...Christian, Mohammedan, and Hindu boys, of every shade of color and variety of descent...standing side by side in the same class, engaged in the common pursuit of English literature, contending for the same honours, and forced to acknowledge the existence of superior merit in their comrades of the lowest, as well as in those of the highest caste. This is a great point gained. The artificial institution of caste cannot long survive the period when the youth of India, instead of being trained to observe it, shall be led by the daily habit of their lives to disregard it. All we have to do is to bring them together, to impress the same character on them, and to leave the yielding and affectionate mind of youth to its natural impulse. Habits of friendly communication will thus be established between all classes, they will insensibily become one people, and the process of enlightening our subjects will proceed simultaneously with that of uniting them among themselves.[10]

The College would thus eventually lead the rest of India into civilization through assimilation of British knowledge, precluding violent revolution against the British by enabling Indians to reform peaceably into partners with the British, and each other, creating a progressive and unified India. To encourage the pioneers of this movement, Trevelyan personally mentored the entering class of Delhi English College students, remaining patron of some of them for decades.

Simultaneous with his support for Delhi English College, from 1829 Trevelyan successfully fought to reform the Delhi Residency itself. He accused his boss, Resident Sir Edward Colebrooke, and also many of Colebrooke's Indian subordinates, of corruption, finally obtaining Colebrooke's dismissal.[11] Trevelyan subsequently rose in the British colonial administration, gaining influence over Governor General Bentinck's educational policy, especially as a particularly vocal member of the General Committee for Public Instruction. In 1834, Trevelyan strongly advocated the entire abandonment of Persian language education, and also the mandatory

10 Charles Edward Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, London, Longmans, 1838, p. 20.

11 See Katherine Prior, Lance Brennan, and Robin Haines, 'Bad Language: The Role of English, Persian and other Esoteric Tongues in the Dismissal of Sir Edward Colebrooke as Resident of Delhi in 1929', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2001, pp. 75–112.

use of the Roman alphabet for all Indian languages.[12] He stood as a central supporter, and brother-in-law, of Thomas Babington Macaulay in the overall drive for Anglicization.[13] After his return to England, he worked for a range of reforms there, even as he continued for decades to patronize Mohan Lal and other Indian protégés.

A College for the Elite of Delhi

The north Indian response to such initiatives for British-style education was mixed, even among the most ambitious elite families. Prior to Delhi English College, several schools established by the Church Missionary Society (including one in Agra begun in 1813) had already started using English-medium and curricula.[14] Yet these other schools also had a strong evangelical Christian agenda, so respectable Indian youths, both Hindu and Muslim, largely did not join their classes. In contrast, ostensibly secular Delhi College was a government-sponsored institution promising attractive careers as officials under the new regime. Nevertheless, even there, its British leadership and curriculum raised issues among Delhi's prominent families about the possible moral corruption of their sons.

Over time, support for such Anglicized education grew sporadically among some established Hindu and Muslim north Indian families. Many already inculcated in their sons plural learning that included both the domestic culture and language of their private sphere and also the public one of the imperial state. Under the Mughals, they had mastered Persianate high culture and language in order to advance their careers. When the British imposed their rule, English education came to appear as the new path toward advancement. Thus, despite continuing opposition, especially among the orthodox, some of the Delhi's service elite families overcame their qualms and succumbed to the attractions of careers under their new rulers, submitting their sons to formal training in

12 Trevelyan, Letter to Committee of the Calcutta School Book Society, Calcutta, January 1834.

13 Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir (eds), *The Great Indian Education Debate*, Richmond, Curzon, 1999.

14 Elmer H. Cutts, 'The Background of Macaulay's Minute', *Journal of the American Historical Association*, vol. 58, no. 4, July 1953, pp. 824–53.

the model pioneered by Delhi English College. The earliest students at Delhi English College therefore entered the newly created cultural and political space between the British colonizer and the peoples of India.

Mohan Lal Kashmiri: The Background

The Pandit community, even before moving out from Kashmir, had already developed sophisticated strategies for adaptation to service under non-Hindus. The *guru* wing of this community stressed its Brahmanic status, while the more secular *karkun* wing developed worldly traditions of service to Muslim rulers.[15] Further, among karkun families, the domestic traditions of Kashmiri language and custom were largely conveyed by the women of the family to their children, while Islamicized Persianate traditions were embodied by their men in the public sphere. Especially from the sixteenth century onward, karkun families settled across north India, joining the Mughal service elite.

Mohan Lal's Pandit family, of the Zutshi sub-caste and Ratrabhag *gotra*, followed this pattern of adaptation to new opportunities. It had settled during the early eighteenth century in north India, seeking and finding employment under the Mughal emperors.[16] Mohan Lal's great-grandfather, Raja Pandit Mani Ram, had earned an hereditary imperial land revenue grant. In the early nineteenth century, Mohan Lal's father, Rai Brahm Nath, shifted the family's administrative orientation, entering the apparently more promising service of the British. Of particular note, he accompanied Mountstuart Elphinstone on a diplomatic mission to Peshawar (1808–9), working as a cultural and political intermediary, translating and negotiating between the British and the diverse Islamic cultures of India's north-west.[17] For such service as 'Persian Munshi'

15 See Henny Sender, *Kashmiri Pandits*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1988.

16 Mohan Lal, *Travel in the Punjab, Afganistan and Turkistan to Balk, Bokhara and Herat and a Visit to Great Britain and Germany*, London, W.H. Allen, 1846, p. 229. For a family history, including a genealogy, see Gupta, *Life*, pp. 2–5. See also H.L. Chopra, *Life of Pandit Mohan Lal*, Delhi, the author, 1979; B.N. Sharga and Rajni Sharga, 'Zutshis of Bazaar Sitaram, Delhi', *Vitasta*, 33, 1999–2000.

17 See Mountstuart Elphinstone, 'Journal', British Library [hereinafter BL], MSS EUR F. 88 series.

to British officials, he adopted the more secular and caste neutral alias Budh Singh.

Rai Brahm Nath/Budh Singh also created an especially diverse domestic environment. In addition to his household centred on his Kashmiri Pandit wife (born into the Kaul family based in Gwalior), he also established another household with a Muslim consort. She had reportedly left Nawab Mirza Ahmed Bakhsh Khan, first Nawab of Ferozepur-Jhirka and Loharu (r. 1806–27), in order to join Budh Singh.[18] Her daughter by Budh Singh married yet another intermediary figure, a Eurasian (in the sense of having mixed parentage), R. Hodges. As Hawes demonstrates, British rule made Eurasians into their 'poor relations', demeaned like many Anglicized Indian intellectuals.[19] Hodges and Mohan Lal would both rise in service to the British and then be expelled by them.

During his childhood, Mohan Lal—whose name in his mother's home was the more Brahmanic Ram Nath—evidently moved freely between the domestic worlds of his Brahmin biological mother and his Muslim stepmother, learning the languages and values inherent in each household. The Persian education he received at home from private tutors and the Islamic culture he imbibed in his stepmother's household prepared him well as a master of the intricate diplomatic and cultural discourse and deportment that characterized many of the royal courts of north India and West and Central Asia. Yet, instead of service to the Mughals, he would apply his expertise under the British. For this, he needed yet another form of education.

Budh Singh recognized that the next generation would need to add mastery of English language and culture to their already multicultural expertise. Consequently, in 1827 Budh Singh enrolled his 16-year-old son, Mohan Lal, in the first English course of Delhi College. With his five Indian classmates, including another member of his own Pandit community, Ram Kisan Haksar, Mohan Lal thus initiated what would become a major new educational track for generations of other Anglicizing north Indian intellectuals.

18 See Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab District Gazetteers, Ferozepur*, Punjab, Punjab government, 1883–5.

19 C.J. Hawes, *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773–1833*, Richmond, Curzon, 1996.

Formal Education at the Delhi English College

Significantly, the first Indian students at Delhi English College did not remember studying either works of English literature or explicit Christian advocacy. Rather, they recalled books that were ostensibly historical or technical including: 'Histories of Greece and Rome; [the] History of England by Goldsmith; four books of Euclid; an Abridgment of Arithmetic; Keith's Use of the Globes; Guy's Geography'.[20] Yet the histories implicitly taught British moral values and the others stressed British scientific accomplishments. These were all established English schoolbooks already used widely in Britain, not written or adapted for Indian students. Nevertheless, despite the apparently secular nature of this course of study, many social and religious leaders in Delhi objected.

Mohan Lal's classmate, Shahamat 'Ali, explained the difficulties faced by the first Muslim students:

> Molvies objected either from jealousy or from the excess of prejudice, [and] declared that, by beginning to receive an English education, we had lost our creed; and all the Mussulmans regarded us as infidels, and abstained from eating and drinking with us. The consequence was, that the Mahomdedan boys, with the exception of a youth named Hadi Hussein, myself, and one or two others, left the English and returned to the Persian school, and were immediately readmitted into their caste, while we continued for some time to be considered in the light of *Kafirs*.[21]

Mohan Lal and the three other Hindu students in this first English class faced similar social pressures. Later, as the financial rewards of service to the British became more evident to their communities, even those Indian leaders initially hostile to this English training stopped ostracizing the students. Delhi English College soon had many Indian students eager to follow in the footsteps of Mohan Lal and his classmates.[22]

20 Shahamat 'Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, London, John Murray, 1847, p. xi. Full references for the more obscure of these books are: Thomas Keith, *A New Treatise on the Use of the Globe: Or, a Philosophical View of the Earth and Heavens*, New York, Samuel Wood & Sons, 1826 reprint; Joseph Guy, *Guy's School Geography on a New and Easy Plan: Comprising not only Complete General Description but much Topographical Information, in a Well-digested Order*, 6th edn, London, Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1821.

21 'Ali, *Sikhs and Afghans*, pp. vii–ix.

22 C.E. Trevelyan claimed the Delhi English College had 300 students within five years, 'Memoir of Mohan Lal', in Lal, *Travel*, p. xxi. The Report on Delhi

Yet, for young Mohan Lal in particular, the new British regime created problems as well as apparent opportunities. He explained that British administrative 'reforms' confiscated the family's hereditary land revenue grant (Budh Singh's lavish lifestyle also apparently contributed to the family's financial difficulties).[23] This forced Mohan Lal to leave the College early and seek employment with the British in 1831.

As 'the first-fruits of the new system' of British-style education, Mohan Lal's fellow students in this initial Delhi English College class later also found employment under the British.[24] His three Hindu classmates received appointments to the faculty in Delhi College itself. After briefly teaching there as well, Shahamat 'Ali, like Mohan Lal, worked under British diplomats and political agents of British indirect rule.[25]

Mohan Lal, the prime example of the type of person Trevelyan sought to support, received his strong patronage. To further Mohan Lal's moral reformation, Trevelyan made arrangements for his protégé to complete the education he began at Delhi College by visiting England in 1832 (although Mohan Lal would not make this journey until a dozen years later).[26] In recognition of Trevelyan's support, Mohan Lal in 1834 dedicated his first book to him as a 'friend...who, besides educating me in youth, early associated me with himself; taught me to think and to act as a man, when most of my companions were still engaged in their education in the class established by him....'[27] Decades later, in 1853, out of 'personal gratitude', Mohan Lal presented to his alma mater 'a full length oil painting', of Trevelyan, that was then displayed in the main Delhi College Hall.[28] Reciprocally, Trevelyan—at that point Sir Charles—

English College, 1834, claims only 40 students had gone on to appointments with government or private establishments, HP, 24 August 1836, 14A cited in Pernau, 'Delhi College'.

23 Lal, *Travel*, p. xx. Gupta attributes this loss to a different cultural conflict: the hostility of the jilted Nawab of Ferozepur-Jirka, whose mistress had become Mohan Lal's stepmother. Gupta, *Life*, p. 3.

24 Trevelyan, 'Memoir', in Lal, *Travel*, pp. xxii–xxiii.

25 See Michael H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991.

26 Lal, *Travel*, pp. 62, 288.

27 Ibid., p. xviii.

28 *Delhi Gazette*, p. 22, 27 February 1853. I am grateful to Margrit Pernau for these references.

accepted Mohan Lal's daughter into his home in England, supervising her English education there (as we shall see). Thus, Delhi English College was the first step in a long series of contested interactions with the colonizers.

Informal Education in the Field

Mohan Lal's specific cultural location made him especially attractive to Lieutenant Sir Alexander Burnes, who was at that time recruiting for a covert political mission in north-west India and Central Asia. They first met socially at the home of the secretary of the Delhi Residency, B. Fitzgerald. Mohan Lal's distinctive combination of Anglicized education from Delhi English College, plus his Persianate administrative and cultural knowledge derived from his family, recommended him. Further, Burnes was convinced that Mohan Lal's social and cultural distance from the Muslims among whom he would operate ensured his dependence on the British:

> I also took a Hindoo lad, of Cashmere family, named Mohun Lal, who had been educated at the English Institution at Delhi, as he would assist me in my Persian correspondence, the forms of which amount to a science in the East. His youth and his creed would, I believed, free me from all the danger of his entering into intrigues with the [local] people....[29]

Over the years, Mohan Lal travelled with several British employers in disguise on clandestine missions in north-west India, Afghanistan, and Persia, surveying and seeking to control various rulers and peoples there. They adopted Muslim dress and comportment since to be identified as British agents often meant death.

On other missions, Mohan Lal openly represented the British state in political negotiations with Indian and other Asian rulers. Using his expertise in Persianate diplomatic rhetoric and protocols, he represented British interests to these rulers. Yet, he also appeared to them as a means of access to the inner secrets of British policies and culture. Thus, both sides regarded him as a cultural and political intermediary.

29 Captain Sir Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara; Containing the Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea to Lahore, with Presents from the King of Great Britain; and an Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia*, 3 vols, London, John Murray, 1839, vol. 1, pp. ix–x, 183.

Over this time, Mohan Lal also learned to master many of the cultural markers and forms of knowledge that would further recommend him to his British employers. While his official title was 'Munshi', he insisted on the more Anglicized and prestigious title of 'Persian Secretary', correcting all written references to him by the former label that he could find. As instructed by his British teachers, Mohan Lal kept a continuous detailed personal journal of his observations and accomplishments in English.[30] He rightly regarded such a journal as providing an entrée to the favour and patronage of higher British officials including the governor general, and later, the British public.

In 1833, just two years into his career, writing from Central Asia, Mohan Lal submitted part of his personal travel journal to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta. The secretary of that learned society, James Prinsep, had been Mohan Lal's drawing and science teacher at Delhi College.[31] The Society published his colourful and ethnographic narrative in its *Journal*, bringing Mohan Lal's accomplishments to the Anglophone public.[32] His authorial position was as an Indian assistant to British officials, yet this *Journal* did not trivialize his contributions to the advancement of British knowledge of the hostile lands beyond the frontiers of British India. Mohan Lal, reading his words in print, was encouraged and submitted further articles, which the *Journal*, as well as the *Delhi Gazette* newspaper, published.[33]

Mohan Lal continued to seek and find recognition among appreciative British officials and patrons. After he travelled to Calcutta in 1834, carrying reports and papers for his British chief, he read a paper before the Asiatic Society, which it published in its *Proceedings*.[34] He remained for a time in Calcutta, while his

30 His classmate Shahamat 'Ali did as well. 'Ali, *Sikhs and Afghans*, p. xi; Burnes, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 297; Lal, *Travel*, pp. 174, 239; Mohan Lal, 12 January 1835 in Elphinstone Correspondence 1835, F 88/96, BL.

31 Trevelyan, 'Memoir', in Lal, *Travel*, pp. ii, xxvii.

32 Munshi Mohun Lal, Letter to Editor, 10 October 1833 and 'A Brief Description of Herat', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 3 January 1834, pp. 9–18.

33 Munshi Mohun Lal, 'Further Information regarding the Siah Posh Trive, or Reputed Descendants of the Macedonians', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 3 February 1834, pp. 76–9.

34 Proceedings of 6 August 1834 Meeting, *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 3 July 1834, pp. 362–4.

British employers equipped him for more scientific observation by training him as a surveyor: 'taking angles, and measuring with the chain'.[35] Mastery of this rigorous technology demonstrated to often skeptical Britons the capacity of Indians to learn and apply British science. On his successful completion of this training, they gifted him the precision instruments he would need to deploy his new skills. This was three decades before the British trained the Indian surveyors known as the 'Pandits', who clandestinely surveyed the lands of Central Asia and Tibet that were too dangerous for a Briton to attempt.[36]

While undergoing this advanced technical training, Mohan Lal also rewrote his journal and published it as a book: *Travel in the Punjab, Afganistan and Turkistan to Balk, Bokhara and Herat* (Calcutta: The Author, 1834). He adopted the popular self-promoting travelogue genre used by several British official-adventurers on the frontier. Keeping in mind his British readers, but apparently also reflecting his own sentiments, Mohan Lal, for example, contrasted emancipated British values with the barbaric ones of Central Asian rulers: 'I am proud of the customs and laws of the English Government, which is an enemy to slavery. In my humble opinion, the enslaving of people will soon bring an enlightened nation to rule in this country [Bokhara], where the laws savor of nothing but despotism, and are framed according to the will of a despot'.[37] In short, he asserted, British rule was liberating contrasted with indigenous rulers. Only in later years would he come to regard British colonialism as despotic as well.

His entry into the world of British public discourse through his journal articles and first book thus proved possible due to his initial training at Delhi English College in control over English language, culture, and science, and the art of advocacy of arguments in modes appreciated by his British patrons. The British Government rewarded him for his diplomatic, technical, and literary accomplishments with a salary increase and title to a plot of land in Delhi.[38] Even after his return to service in the north-west, Mohan Lal would continue to contribute articles of ethnography

35 Trevelyan in *Travel*, p. xxvi.

36 See Derek Waller, *Pandits: British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia*, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1990.

37 Lal, *Travel*, p. 92.

38 Ibid., pp. 226–7.

and archaeology to the Asia Society's *Journal*, for example about Greek antiquities that he found in Afghanistan and about the racial and geographic origins of the local inhabitants '...collected from authentic sources'.[39]

All this made him well known in the more progressive part of the British community as their ideal 'new-model Indian'. Writing in the *Asiatic Journal*, James Todd argued 'this most intelligent Hindu ought to be made an honorary member of every Asiatic Society'.[40] Trevelyan described the advantages that Mohan Lal's English education afforded him:

> What has given Mohan Lal so decided an advantage over the generality of his countrymen? What is it that has gained for him a willing acknowledgment of his personal superiority by the princes of Central Asia, and enables him to enjoy, on terms of equality, the society of European gentlemen? It is simply his knowledge of the English language. Not a critical knowledge—that he leaves to those philologists in whose estimation languages are desirable objects of acquisition, not so much as a medium of obtaining knowledge, as for their own proper sakes—but such knowledge as enables him to read and understand English books, and to converse intelligently with English gentlemen on ordinary subjects.
>
> This is the simple cause of Mohan Lal's elevation of character: and can it be doubted that, under the Divine blessing, the same means which have produced such a decided effect in raising an individual in the scale of civilization and honour, will, if properly applied, lead to the same result in regard to the entire population of this great country?[41]

It was, thus, Mohan Lal's burgeoning ability to use English as a means of access to British knowledge and to participate in discourse with British society which Trevelyan highlighted.

As an early product of Anglicized education, therefore, Mohan Lal stood, in the eyes of these British 'modernizers', as the pattern that all Indians should follow. They used him to prove to skeptical Britons that India was capable of progress in social evolutionary terms. Yet, even sympathetic British critics, who felt his work 'most

39 Munshi Mohan Lal, 'A Brief Account of Masu'd, Known by the Name of Farid Shakarganj or Shakarbar' and 'Description of Uch-Shari'f', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 5 October 1836, pp. 635–8, 796–8; 'Account of Kala Bagh on the Right Bank of the Indus' and 'A Brief Account of the Origin of the Daud Putras', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 7 January 1838, pp. 25–33.

40 *Asiatic Journal*, 45, May–August 1835, p. 9. See also Gupta, *Life*, p. xi.

41 Trevelyan, 'Memoir', in Lal, *Travel*, p. xxvii.

creditable', qualified that praise by adding: when 'considered as the work of an Asiatic in a foreign tongue'.[42]

Mohan Lal also found a degree of brotherhood with some Britons through freemasonry, as did some other Anglicized Indians of his class. Some lodges of this European secret society remained exclusively white. Others, however, formed a common meeting ground for Indians, Persians, and Britons.[43] Anglicized Indian members proved as adept as Europeans in learning freemasonry's arcane formulas and in enacting its costumed rituals. The elaborate Masonic hierarchy, therefore, partly transcended the usual colonial distinctions based on ethnicity, religion, and race, admitting Indian members to an influential community throughout the British Empire and Europe.

For the Indian, Central, and West Asian rulers with whom Mohan Lal dealt, his expertise in English and access to British knowledge and authority made him distinctive, but also dangerous. In 1833, the ruler of Herat, Sardar Din Muhammad Khan, set Mohan Lal openly to test the linguistic competence of an Afghan 'youth, twenty years of age, who had represented himself as an English scholar who claimed to know English'.[44] Mohan Lal proved his claims false, thus shaming the pretender in open court. Local rulers offered lavish rewards if Mohan Lal would use his expertise and position to influence British policy to their advantage.[45] The Persian and Afghan emperors honoured him respectively with the 'Order of the Lion and Sun' and the 'Order of the Durrani Empire'. Yet, simultaneously, his identity as an Anglicized Indian and agent of the British also meant that his life was often threatened. Nor was his adoption of British culture complete.

Mohan Lal's experiential education among the peoples of Central and West Asia clearly affected his self-conceptualization profoundly. Initially, he identified with his natal traditions. He retained Kashmiri Brahmin servants and cook, arranging to eat separately from both the British and Muslim members of their party, and

42 Henry Havelock, *Narrative of the War in Afghanistan in 1838–39*, 2 vols, London, Henry Colburn, 1840, vol. 1, p. 150.

43 Lal, *Travel*, p. 296; John R. Hinnells, *Zoroastrians in Britain*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 103; S.M. Edwardes, *Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, 1831–1909, A Memoir*, London, Oxford University Press, 1923, pp. 50–1; Ardeshir Ruttonji Wadia, *The Bombay Dockyard*, Bombay, R.A. Wadia, 1957, p. 342.

44 Lal, *Travel*, p. 128.

45 Ibid., pp. 129, 264.

declining to share food or drink with his local hosts, despite the dangers of disclosure of his Brahmin identity that this occasionally entailed.[46] This evidently followed the Kashmiri Pandit karkun community's customary adoption of Islamic dress and culture in appearance but preservation of its inner Brahmanic purity of bodily substance. Further, early in his journal, he privately recorded his critical reactions against the Muslim practices and Islamic beliefs he observed around him.

Nonetheless, his evident close socializing with Muslims and Christians put him ritually outside the Brahmanical fold. In 1834, the caste council of his own Pandit community in Delhi formally outcast him. As Mohan Lal explained, they forbade him 'to drink out of the same cup with them...[and] discarded me from their society...so I am now left without friends and without a place to reside in my native city of Delhi'.[47] He protested that, to that point, he 'always observed the outward form of the Hindoo religion' and never interdined with Muslims or Christians. This excommunication, he protested, 'hurt the feelings of my old parents and mortif[ied] their hearts'. He could not, however, get this reversed, even by appealing to the British law court in Delhi.

In response, Mohan Lal started in his journal to ridicule some of the Hindu practices and beliefs he observed:

> ...Hindus of both sexes, after bathing themselves, worship[ed] the pictures of their deities, which were painted on walls, some of them being represented with four heads, and others with monkeys' heads, which they presented with offerings of flowers and fruits.... Here is a display of utter ignorance and prostitution of all sense—rational creatures turned fools, and deceived into a belief in stones, water, and fire, all of which I am sure can do them no good.[48]

He also found distasteful the deportment of partly Anglicized Hindus who continued to 'rub mustard-oil over their bodies, which makes them disagreeable to those whom they approach to converse with'.[49]

Yet, his books, written primarily for a British audience, never explicitly specified his religious identity. He recorded that, when quizzed by the missionary, Reverend Joseph Wolff (himself a

46 Ibid., pp. 91, 108, 197–8.

47 Ibid., p. 225; Panjab Records, Letter 40, 22 December 1834 and Delhi Cases, 25 February 1835, cited in Gupta, *Life*, pp. 63, 66.

48 Ibid., p. 226.

49 Ibid., pp. 226–7.

convert from Judaism to Christianity), Mohan Lal pleased him by saying 'that my religion consisted in the worship of one sole Supreme Being'.[50] When quizzed by the Iranian emperor, 'whether I was a Sunni or Shia', Mohan Lal pleased this Shi'ite ruler by giving a suggestively Shi'ite answer: 'I am a friend of Panjtan, or five persons [of the family of the Prophet Muhammad]'.[51] Indeed, in his journal, Mohan Lal began to associate himself with the martyrs of Shi'ism: 'I suffered much from thirst, and remembered the hardships of Ali's family, which were caused by the scarcity of water in the dasht [desert] of Karbala'.[52] He also repeatedly participated in Shi'ite congregational prayer and visited the shrines of the Shi'ite Imams.[53]

At some point following his outcasting by the Kashmiri Pandit community, Mohan Lal indeed seems to have adopted the Shi'ite religious tradition, at least in part as a matter of conviction.[54] He began to dine with Muslims and Christians. When his Pandit Brahmin cook died in 1837, for example, he employed a Shi'ite 'Persian cook, Mohammed Taher'.[55] At first as part of his disguise, but later in more intimate ways, Mohan Lal assumed the alias and identity 'Agha Hasan Jan'. Yet, many Muslims he met identified him as a Hindu. Nor were his British patrons pleased that he selected Shi'ite Islam over Anglican Christianity. He thus became marginal to all these cultures.

During the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–42), Mohan Lal served as the main interpreter and supply agent for the invading British-Indian army. He established a household in Kabul, including his father, at least one wife, and his children. At the time of the Kabul insurrection of 1841, Mohan Lal was one of the first on the British side captured, yet he continued to negotiate on behalf of the British even from prison. But he received little support from British authorities. Of all his relatives, employers, and friends, only Shahamat 'Ali (then stationed at Indore) pledged the Rs 10,000 ransom demanded by his Afghan captors.

50 Ibid., pp. 40–1. See, Joseph Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans and other Sects*, 2nd edn, London, the Author, 1835.

51 Lal, *Travel*, pp. 135–6.

52 Ibid., pp. 70, 147.

53 Ibid., pp. 99ff.

54 Ibid., pp. 70, 99, 135–6, 147.

55 Ibid., p. 236.

Mohan Lal, however, eventually escaped prison, finding refuge under the protection of Shi'ite party in Kabul. From there, he continued to represent and advance British interests. As authorized by the desperate British authorities, he promised large amounts of money to buy support, including promising a bounty for the assassination of their enemy Afghan leaders. He borrowed heavily on his own credit for these sums. Finally, he proved successful in negotiating the release of British prisoners in exchange for ransom. Despite Mohan Lal's financial and moral pledges on behalf of the British government to various Afghan leaders, however, some of these men were subsequently abandoned by that government.

Mohan Lal, while one of the few heroes of the British disaster in Afghanistan, also generated British resentment and became a scapegoat for their failures. British critics of the assassinations he organized on the instructions of his British employers reviled him as 'endowed with a genius for traitor-making'.[56] The death in Afghanistan of Burnes and other officers who had authorized his loans, and the destruction of their records and papers, left him and other creditors with no proof of their large financial claims due from the government.

After Mohan Lal finally escaped Afghanistan and returned to India in 1843, he found little recognition or reward for what he had done. While he requested appointment as Persian secretary in the prestigious Lucknow or Hyderabad Residencies, instead he was sent to the political agency under the British envoy to the Sikh government at Lahore, at a much reduced salary. Further, this was an appointment as a mere assistant, instead of as an independent agent as he had been before. Most British officials under whom he served distrusted him, due to his complex financial and moral relations with the government following Kabul, their sense that he had risen above his proper station, and his ambiguous cultural identity that did not easily fit British cultural categories for Indians.

Frustrated, Mohan Lal obtained 18 months' leave of absence, nominally in order to visit Bombay but actually to go to Britain. Along the way, he visited his friend and classmate Shahamat 'Ali and collected letters of introduction from many British officials

56 J.W. Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, 3 vols, London, Richard Bentley, 1857, vol. 1, p. 459.

who knew his work or that of his father. Indians with experience in London also gave letters of introduction to their friends. For example, a fellow Freemason, Manakjee Cursetjee, wrote a letter of introduction for him to Mountstuart Elphinstone, former governor of Bombay and patron of Mohan Lal's father, detailing Mohan Lal's three goals: 'to see the beautiful England, the wonders of which he has heard so much about', 'to deliver some valuable papers belonging to his late patron [Sir Alexander Burnes] to his father personally', and 'to have his particular services in Cabool substantially acknowledged by the Court of Directors'.[57] While in England, Mohan Lal would indeed repeatedly visit Elphinstone, complaining that his work in Kabul was 'successful, but not rewarded'.[58]

Movement to Britain

Mohan Lal sailed from Bombay in 1844 with only one servant (a Muslim man from Kabul), reaching London via Egypt that September. On his arrival, he recorded his warm welcome, how he socialized and dined with his 'friends in England, [who were] desirous to shew me every attention whose continued civilities and interest in my behalf made me feel as comfortable as if I were among my own kindred, and in my native land'.[59] Using himself as the model, and reiterating the creed of Delhi English College, Mohan Lal advocated Anglicization as the key to India's future: 'India will never regain the zenith of its former glory, nor even prosper, until the whole population becomes acquainted with the language of the government, and then, entertaining the pacific sentiments of loyalty and homage to her present honourable British masters, claim and enjoy her rights like the other subjects of Britain'.[60] Yet, Britons would never let him become one of themselves. He always remained distinct from the Britons around him.

57 Manachjee Cursetjee, 19 December 1844, Elphinstone Correspondence, F 88/126, BL.

58 Mohan Lal, 27 September, 7, 10, 13 October, 6 November 1844, Elphinstone Correspondence, F 88/126, BL; Lal, *Travel*, p. 306.

59 Lal, *Travel*, p. 300.

60 Ibid., p. 319.

During his time in Britain, he distinguished himself by retaining his Indian clothing. Yet, he ate freely with Britons. Indeed, many British dignitaries, including members of the East India Company's Court of Directors, dined with him; the Company's Chairman even deferentially called upon him in his hotel.

Mohan Lal admired British culture, but from the perspective of an outsider, aware of the limitations it placed on him. For example, in his comments on the London theatre, he critiqued the immorality of actresses and, by extension, the British elite connected with them: 'I could not say much in commendation of the beauty or modesty of the females who appear on the stage. However, they attract the attention and respect of the spectators; and some of them have made conquests, and have become wives of noblemen, and associate with ladies of the highest birth'.[61] He also remarked at length how money determined a woman's marriage prospects, leaving many unmarried. He was impressed with steam-powered industrialization and railway, and the electric telegraph. Yet, he also showed great pity for the grinding poverty he observed in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Late in 1844, Mohan Lal made a much publicized presentation of Sir Alexander Burnes' papers to Burnes' father in Scotland. *The Times*, echoing the *Edinburgh Witness* and the *Montrose Review*, recounted the honoured reception of this

> celebrated Oriental stranger, the companion and protégé of the late lamented Sir Alexander Burnes.... He has a remarkably pleasant and highly intellectual cast of countenance, and is dressed in a magnificent Hindoo costume.... His countenance beams with intelligence; and his intercourse with Europeans has enabled him to adapt himself, with perfect tact, to all their habits and modes of thinking, so that he can sustain with care and propriety, his part in any general conversation.[62]

While he was in Scotland, the fashionable artist, Sir William Allan, president of the Royal Scottish Academy, painted his portrait and photographers David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson made a series of calotypes of him.[63]

61 Ibid., p. 305.

62 *Times*, 25 October 1844, 5a; 7 November 1844, 5b.

63 A.D.H. Bivar, 'The Portraits and Career of Mohammed Ali, Son of Kazem-Beg: Scottish Missionaries and Russian Orientalism', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 57, no. 2, 1994, pp. 283–302; Sara Stevenson, *David*

Mohan Lal also toured Ireland, returning to London via Liverpool and the British Midlands, receiving honouring receptions everywhere.[64] Mohan Lal made a second trip to Scotland, at the invitation of 'my kind masonic brother, Mr Laurie, secretary to the Grand Lodge of Scotland'.[65]

He also made a European tour, late in 1845.[66] Observing Belgian Catholics at mass, he derided them as idolaters like Hindus: 'The lights, the burning of incense, the ringing of small bells and the ornamenting and worshipping small images of Jesus and the Virgin Mary, roused my mind, and brought to my recollection the mode of adoring practiced by the idolaters in Mathra and Bindraban, in India'.[67] Thus, he criticized a range of other religious traditions, especially those evincing idol-worship, based on his 'rationalist' training begun at Delhi College and his later Shi'ite beliefs.

In Britain, Mohan Lal gained powerful supporters. He had an audience with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert—although as a private individual in light of his ongoing financial claims against the Indian government—and they invited him to a Royal Ball. While Mohan Lal did not record his social affairs, his family later claimed to receive repeated letters seeking support from his 'English wife' and her alleged children by him.[68] He did boast that he was made an honorary member of 'the Oriental, Carlton, Travellers', Junior, and United Service, Star, and Victoria Yacht Clubs'. In these exclusive gentlemen's clubs he socialized with, and lobbied, influential British politicians and cultural leaders.[69]

In response to his petition of January 1845, the Company's Directors granted him an annual pension of Rs 6000 (£600) plus

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Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson: Catalogue of Their Calotypes Taken Between 1843 and 1847 in the Collection of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, 1981, pp. 78, 294; Sara Stevenson, *Facing the Light: The Photography of Hill and Adamson*, Edinburgh, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 2002, pp. 91, 94, 98 image 56.

64 Mohan Lal to Mayor of Liverpool, 16 December 1844, MSS Eur A 84, BL.

65 Lal, *Travel*, p. 308.

66 Mohan Lal to Elphinstone, 28 July 1846, Elphinstone Correspondence, F 88/129 BL.

67 Lal, *Travel*, p. 320.

68 Gupta, *Life*, p. 293.

69 Lal, *Travel*, p. 317.

a special gratuity of Rs 15,000. Yet these were not as much as Mohan Lal felt he deserved, in light of what British or other Indian officials had received for lesser services in Afghanistan. He and his supporters, including Members of Parliament, considered the grant of a tax-free landholding estate would be more appropriate to his achievements.[70] The Directors then raised the pension to £1000 per annum.[71] The British popular press regarded the pension as a 'munificent reward' that would inspire other 'native servants in the East'.[72] The government, however, refused to deal with his huge financial claims based on his loans in Afghanistan, telling him to take those up with authorities in India.

While in Britain, Mohan Lal entered the heated public discourse about the disastrous Afghan War, and about British policies in India generally. His position, defending Burnes and also himself, was highly enmeshed in partisan politics. While Mohan Lal said that he disdained writing letters to newspaper editors to answer his critics, he instead published huge books publicizing his career and his political position. He expanded and republished his first book, adding an extensive account of his triumphant visit to Britain: *Travel in the Punjab, Afganistan and Turkistan to Balk, Bokhara and Herat and a Visit to Great Britain and Germany* (London: W.H. Allen, 1846). He also wrote and published a 900-page *Life of Amir Dost Mohammed Khan of Kabul* in two volumes (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1846), filled with documentary evidence that justified his own and Burnes' actions in Afghanistan. Mohan Lal dedicated his *Life* to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, presented a copy to Conservative prime minister Sir Robert Peel, and used it to lobby other British notables.[73] These works cost him £300 to publish and were also apparently intended to capitalize on the current public fascination with Afghanistan.

70 Mohan Lal to Henry Willock, 18 January 1845, Henry Willock to Elphinstone, 3 February 1845, and Mohan Lal to Elphinstone, 9 June 1845, Elphinstone Correspondence, F 88/127–8, BL.

71 Minutes of the Court of Directors, 16 April, 14 May, 11, 25 June, and 30 July 1845, B/210, BL; Minutes of Military and Political Committee, 29–31 July 1845, L/MIL/2/220, BL. Gupta, *Life*, pp. 290, 302.

72 *Times*, 23 May 1845, 5c.

73 Mohan Lal to Peel, 4 August 1846, MS ADD 40597 Peel Papers, vol. 417, F45, BL; Mohan Lal to Elphinstone, 23 January 1845, Elphinstone Correspondence, F 88/127, BL; Auckland to Hobhouse, 21 August 1846, Broughton Correspondence, MSS Eur F 213/17, BL.

In his books, Mohan Lal censured some official British actions, for example, their betrayal of the Mirs of Sind. He himself had negotiated treaties on behalf of the British with these rulers. His British supervisors had authorized him to assure these rulers that, if they cooperated, they would be kept on the throne. When they were not and instead annexed Sind, Mohan Lal felt personally dishonoured, and he pointed this out to his British readers.[74]

Mohan Lal had entered a highly charged political conflict. Many Britons purchased and admired his books, particularly those sympathetic to the political faction that included Burnes, Governor General Auckland, and Mohan Lal. Others, however, criticized both Mohan Lal as author and the political position he advocated. The reviewer in the *Quarterly Review* demeaned his 'absurd... mimicry of John Bull phraseology, and the thoroughly Asiatic modes of thinking and feeling which have survived all his Feringhee training'.[75] The reviewer in the *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* decried 'this Kashmirian scribbler's literary misdemeanour'—that an 'Oriental' would write a book in order to sell it and make money 'as a publisher's hack'.[76] These critics regarded the glimpses that he provided them into 'the Oriental' mind to be valuable, but located in the category 'Oriental' both Mohan Lal and the Asian subjects of his books.

Backed by his influential British supporters, Mohan Lal continued to lobby for more recognition, arguing that the reward and honours given to him were inadequate to his accomplishments. Even as he was leaving Britain late in 1846, he continued to solicit a British knighthood, to go with his Persian and Afghan orders.[77] Many British authorities, however, regarded this as presumptuous in an Indian. Despite Anglicization and dedicated service to the British cause in Asia, Mohan Lal never received recognition or acceptance by the British, especially those in India, as being one of them.

74 Mohan Lal, *Life of Amir Dost Mohammed Khan of Kabul*, 2 vols, London, Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1846, vol. 1, p. 399, vol. 2, pp. 81–3.

75 *Quarterly Review*, 78, 156, September 1846, pp. 463–510.

76 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 60, no. 373, November 1846, pp. 539–54.

77 Minutes of the Court of Directors, 16, 23 December 1845, B/211; 8, 22, 29 July 1846, B/212; 14 October 1846, B/213, BL.

Return to India

After his return to India, Mohan Lal never again received employment from the government despite his many requests. Most British colonial officials felt him multiply corrupted by his honoured reception in London that raised his expectations above his race, by his complex financial claims on the government, and by his attacks on the Government of India's policies. Mohan Lal's direct supervisor stopped his salary of Rs 320 per month until London ordered it restored. His half-sister's husband, Hodges, was accused of corruption for extorting money from Indian rulers in exchange for Mohan Lal's influence in London, and was dismissed from his post in the British administration.[78]

Mohan Lal also never received the Rs 79,496 which he claimed that he had personally paid for supplies for the army in Afghanistan. Mohan Lal's many requests finally led to the creation of a commission to investigate his claims in 1853. The conclusions of the commissioners varied but they settled on a repayment to him of Rs 12,000, which was the mean average of their recommendations. The governor general, however, vetoed any repayment at all.[79]

For the last 30 years of his life, Mohan Lal remained frustratingly alienated from the cultures around him, although he continued to have friends. He remained close to his half-sister's husband, Hodges; allegedly he married one of Hodges' daughters by another wife. He often used the name Agha Hasan Jan, and patronized Shi'i religious institutions.[80] He reportedly had many Muslim wives. Recognizing the value of women in altering the culture within a family, he sent a daughter to England to be Anglicized, under the guardianship of his old patron, Sir Charles Trevelyan.[81]

78 Foreign Secret Consultations, 25 October 1845, nos 78–81, National Archives of India, New Delhi [hereinafter NAI]; Gupta, *Life*, pp. 263–73. Yapp largely accepted these accusations against Mohan Lal and Hodges. Malcolm Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran, and Afghanistan, 1798–1850*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980.

79 Gupta, *Life*, pp. 312–18.

80 Deputy Commissioner Loodianah to Commissioner Cis Sutlej States, 26 December 1853, Foreign Political Consultations, 10 February 1854, nos 272–4, NAI.

81 Some sources report that he sent two daughters, both of whom died of smallpox on the voyage home.

Tragically, she died of smallpox on her way back to India. Meanwhile, Mohan Lal's various business undertakings failed, and he fell into debt—despite his annual pension of Rs 10,000—and had to hide from prosecution by his creditors.

A British official who sought to patronize him mourned the waste of his potential: 'a man who had been so well received in England and other parts of Europe by the very first people, Kings and Queens not excepted, should not be ignored by the British Society of this country as I found Mohan Lal was, and thus be driven back on his heathen and ignorant associates to the inevitable deterioration of the enlightened ideas he had acquired in his European tour'.[82] Instead of a symbol of what Anglicization could do to 'improve' Indians, he thus became a symbol of how Indians could fail to live up to it.

Ironically, during the 1857 fighting Mohan Lal had to flee Delhi as a man associated in the popular mind with the British. His neighbour and half-brother-in-law, Hodges, was killed for the same reason. Mohan Lal eventually died in obscurity in Delhi in 1877. Not all Anglicized Indian officials shared the ultimate failure of Mohan Lal's career, although all paid some price.

Mohan Lal as Precursor

As the most prominent member of his Delhi English College class, Mohan Lal became a model, and a salutary warning, for them and other north Indian intellectuals. Several Indian officials, including Shahamat 'Ali, explicitly cited the rewards that Mohan Lal had received as a precedent for their own pension requests.[83] Indeed, Shahamat 'Ali, explicitly followed in his footsteps. At the encouragement of Mohan Lal, he, too, published his personal journal as a book, embedded in a narrative and political analysis of British policy: *The Sikhs and Afghans in Connexion with India and Persia Immediately Before and After the Death of Ranjeet Singh from the Journal of an Expedition to Kabul, through the Panjab and the Khaibar*

82 Report of Colonel Goldney cited in Deputy Commissioner Loodianah to Commissioner Cis Sutlej States, 26 December 1853, Foreign Political Consultations, 10 February 1854, nos 272–4, NAI.

83 Ghulam Mahomed Khan Petition, Foreign Political Consultations, 16 February 1853, NAI.

Pass (London: J. Murray, 1847).[84] He, too, visited Britain, publishing on his arrival *Notes and Opinions of a Native on the Present State of India and the Feelings of Its Peoples* (Ryde, Isle of Wight: George Butler printer, 1848).

Shahamat 'Ali wrote this second book largely to defend Mohan Lal's and Delhi English College's Anglicizing model, and to point out the racially-based betrayals of British promises. He described the growing resentment among the 'natives of India' to 'the distinctions of colour and creed... which... have marked... the policy of the British towards its Indian subjects, [and] which has proved to be not only ruinous to them and their country, but to have destroyed the good name of the English in the estimation of the Asiatic nations in general'.[85] He explained how estranged his own class of Anglicized officials had become from their own communities: '...such of the natives as receive an English education, and imitate the customs and manners of the English, are looked upon with disgust...'.[86] Yet, despite their accomplishments, sacrifices, and suffering, such men were underemployed by the government of India, and subordinated to less qualified British officials. Explicitly using the example of Mohan Lal, he showed how even the inadequate honours he had received only 'prejudiced the minds of the European part of the service generally against him, as if being a native, he was unworthy of this distinction. The consequence is, that, instead of being employed in some suitable situation, where by his services he might have given further testimonies of his gratitude and usefulness, he is allowed to lead an idle and inactive life in retirement'.[87]

While in Britain, Shahamat 'Ali also sought to imitate Mohan Lal by demonstrating his Orientalist literary skills, publishing his English translation of a Persian manuscript, *History of Bhawulpore* (London: James Madden, 1848). The Company's Directors, however, gave less financial reward to Shahamat 'Ali than they had to

84 Lal, *Life*, vol. 2, p. 250, note.

85 Shahamat 'Ali, *Notes and Opinions of a Native on the Present State of India and the Feelings of Its Peoples*, Ryde, Isle of Wight, George Butler printer, 1848, pp. v, 6.

86 'Ali, *Notes*, p. 75. Trevelyan also remarked on how this class would be alienated from Indian society and rulers and hence would necessarily cling to the British. Charles Edward Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, London, Longmans, 1838, pp. 193–4.

87 'Ali, *Notes*, p. 93, note.

Mohan Lal.[88] Further, Shahamat 'Ali's more muted public image in Britain and what Bayly calls his more 'loyalist... Indian Tory' political position generated less resentment among his British employers in India and audiences in Britain. Thus, his career prospered as far as his employers would permit an Indian to go.[89]

In the twentieth century, Jawaharlal Nehru also identified himself with Mohan Lal. Nehru reported coming across Mohan Lal's *Travel*, while browsing through a London used-books shop. Fascinated by his fellow Kashmiri Pandit predecessor, about whom he had hitherto known nothing, Nehru reconsidered his own career in light of Mohan Lal's. Indeed, Nehru wrote the 'Forward' to Hari Ram Gupta's 1943 Indian nationalist biography of Mohan Lal.

Indeed, both post-independence India and Pakistan have tried to locate Mohan Lal within their nationalist projects. Agencies in both nations have sought to recover his historic role and accomplishments by reissuing his books. In India, Punjab University republished Mohan Lal's *Travel* in 1971; the Indian Council for Historical Research sponsored another republication in 1977. In Pakistan, Mohan Lal's *Life* was republished in Karachi (by Oxford University Press) in 1978. Nevertheless, his complex identity as an intellectual moving uneasily among various cultures has resisted simple classification. Yet, this very problematic of his multiple and diverse educations—at home, in the Delhi English College, and in the field in India, West and Central Asia, and in Britain—reveals the complexity of the colonial situation.

As demonstrated repeatedly by Delhi College, and Delhi English College in particular, the intellectual history of nineteenth-century India should not be seen as bilateral, as the progressive movement from traditional (read 'Indian') to the modern (read 'British'). Rather, as Morgan argues, it was 'kaleidoscopic... far more intricate alignments arose than the often conventional intruding European ranged against retreating non-European'.[90]

88 Minutes of the Court of Directors, 2, 9 August 1848, B/216; 22 November, 29 December 1848, 7 March, 4 April 1849, B/217, BL. Shahamat 'Ali received appointments as Political Agent to Central Indian states and, eventually, the order C.S.I.

89 Bayly, *Empire*, p. 234.

90 Philip D. Morgan, 'Encounters between British and "Indigenous" Peoples', in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (eds), *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850*, London, University College London Press, 1999, p. 47.

Certainly, British colonial assertions convinced many Indian families that a formal secular English education, such as that offered by Delhi English College, would be the means of improvement, economic if not always moral. Yet, the enduring influences of domestic education, often at the hands of mothers or private tutors, should not be forgotten. Nor were Hindu or Islamic cultures always the ones left behind by Anglicization. The life and career of Mohan Lal, while evincing particularly prominent movements, demonstrates the range of options and limitations faced by Indian intellectuals during early British colonialism.

9

Maulawi Zaka Ullah*

Sharif Culture and Colonial Rule

Mushirul Hasan

A branch of Islamic literature in which didactic morality is a frequent subject of treatment is that concerned with *adab*, manners and 'professional' etiquette.[1] Used in its most general sense as a greeting, adab is also defined as correct behaviour in the process of a person being educated, guided, and formed into a good Muslim.[2] Thus the eighteenth-century French adventurer Antoine-Lois Henri Polier (*c.* 1741–95) used phrases like 'gentlemanly' behaviour, 'candour', and 'loyalty' to express proper conduct. Polier's image of Indians is based on their relationship to success and power, not on their status within the varna hierarchy. He, therefore, deploys a vocabulary to identify them in terms of the professions they pursue, relates to them on professional grounds, and judges their conduct by using the urbane and upper-class notions of proper conduct popularized by the

* An earlier version of this paper appeared in C.F. Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, Delhi, 2003, introduced by Margrit Pernau and me.

1 Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam*, Cambridge, 1957 edn, p. 235.

2 Ira M. Lapidus, 'Knowledge, Virtue, and Action: The Classical Muslim Conception of Adab and the Nature of Religious Fulfilment in Islam', in Barbara Daly Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley, 1984, p. 39.

Mughals.[3] In the post-Mughal capital of Lucknow and the erstwhile Mughal *suba* of Awadh, the social identifiers continued to be the caste-and community-neutral categorizations.[4]

Both in Delhi and Lucknow, the old culture did not vanish despite colonial rule's intrusive role.[5] While clinging to established traditions, acquisition of knowledge and the strict observance of professional codes being part thereof, individuals and families became part of and not distanced from an ever-changing social and cultural landscape. They earned respect and fame not because they were wealthy or powerful, but because of their moral stature and professional standing. Thus, the death of Hakim Mahmud Khan of Delhi, also mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Halim Sharar (*c.* 1860–1926) in his book *Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*, moved Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali (*c.* 1837–1914) to write an elegy of great pathos and power:

> The wealth that is so scarce in the market of the world today,
> Thy graveyard is endowed with it in abundance.[6]

The death of Mirza Asad Ullah 'Ghalib' (*c.* 1797–1869) and Saiyid Ahmad Khan (*c.* 1817–1898) evoked similar responses from Hali.[7] Years later, *Comrade* (Calcutta, Delhi) mourned the demise of Hakim 'Abdu'l-'Aziz, the renowned Lucknow physician, and the scholar Aga Kamalu'd-Din Sanjar. Founder of the *Madrasa-e takmilu't-tibb* and a physician of exceptional attainments and experience, the hakim enjoyed repute as a leading exponent of *Yunani* medicine. 'We still await,' the paper concluded its obituary with the comment, 'the birth of... eminent physicians like the late Hakim 'Abdu'l-Aziz, or poets of the power and versatility of the late Aga Sanjar. Hitherto [the products of the 'New Spirit'], have had to

3 Muzaffar Alam and Seema Alavi (eds), *A European Experience of the Mughal Orient*, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 60, 61.

4 Ibid., p. 57.

5 This is evident from the essays of Rashidu'l-Khairi (*c.* 1870–1936) in *Dilli ki Akhri Bahar*, Delhi, 1937.

6 Some of the Urdu lines and their translations are in *Hali's Musaddas: The Flow and Ebb of Islam*. Translated, and with a critical introduction by Christopher Shackle and Javed Majeed, New Delhi, 1997, p. 46.

7 Some of the obituaries or *marsiyas* (elegies) in poetry are in Khaliq Ahmad Nizami (ed.), *Armughan-e Aligarh*, Aligarh, 1974. The emotionalism expressed therein illuminates several aspects of social and cultural history.

depend for light and inspiration on men who had formed their minds and characters on the faith and culture of the past.'[8]

What made Mahmud Khan, 'Abdu'l-'Aziz, and Aga Kamalu'd-Din Sanjar so endearing to their contemporaries? This is, in part, answered by a remarkable document produced by the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference. Published in Lahore with essays from Aligarh's leading lights, this treatise prescribes codes of behaviour for the Muslim communities.[9] It is, in all probability, inspired by *Akhlaqu'l-ashraf* ('Ethics of the Aristocracy'), authored by Ubayad-e Zakani, the fourteenth-century Persian parodist and satirical writer.[10] Other works on ethics were also in circulation, notably the *Akhlaq-e nasiri* written by the celebrated astronomer Nasiru'd-Din Tusi, the *Akhlaq-e jalali* by the philosopher Jalalu'd-Din Dawani, and the *Akhlaq-e muhsini* compiled by Husain-e Kashifi. While translations of these books were printed at Hertford for Anglo-Indian officials,[11] their original Persian version served as a guide for Delhi's Urdu writers who compiled such works with similar titles. Broadly speaking, the hallmark of high culture, according to them, was not worldly power and material possessions but knowledge, intelligence, refinement, and personal and professional integrity in private and public persona. Those possessing these attributes were the standard-bearers of the much celebrated *sharif* milieu.

Maulawi Muhammad Zaka Ullah (*c.* 1832–1910), the grand old man of Delhi, fulfilled nearly all the qualifications laid down in late nineteenth-century religious and ethical texts. In his obituary published in August 1911, one of his best friends described him as *karimu'n-nafs* (noble-minded, of a generous soul), *karimu'l-akhlaq* (most generous and noble), *wasihu'l-nazar* (broadminded, with breath of vision), *munkasiru'l-mizaj* (humble), *raushan dimagh*, (enlightened), and *faiyaz tab'a* (generous and beneficent).[12] The paradigm of sharif culture is essentially ideal and many of its protagonists fell considerably short of it. But Zaka Ullah, who was influenced by Islam's ethical norms and immoral precepts and by the Persian

8 *Comrade*, 21 October 1911.

9 *Risala-e Conference muta'alliq tamaddun-o-ma'asharat*, Aligarh, n.d.

10 Edward G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Cambridge, 1992, vol. 3, pp. 244–9.

11 Ibid., pp. 442–3.

12 Maulana Muhammad Yahya, *Sairu'l-musannifin*, Delhi, 1928, vol. 2, p. 211.

moralist Shaikh Sa'adi's (580–692/1184–1292) *Bostan* ('The Fruit Garden') and *Gulistan* ('The Rose Garden'; the Urdu translation printed in Nastaliq type was priced at Rs 32 in 1809), paid special attention to the acquisition of knowledge, and to gentlemanly conduct. At the same time his conception of adab and public and private morality was different from some of his contemporaries in so far as he affirmed that virtues such as honesty, truthfulness, loyalty to friends, and concern for the poor and needy, had a place in any great civilization. In other words, the Islamic ethical ideal was not very different from the ethical ideals of other religions. 'Such is the potent combination of earnest, truthful and utilitarian ideas,' Zaka Ullah writes, 'that remove darkness and ignorance from this world.... Their protagonists underline unity and harmony rather than discord and disunity. Their ideas, though derived from different sources, ultimately merge into a stream and impact on nations and communities in much the same way.'[13]

What flows from this example are a set of general propositions that serve to situate Zaka Ullah, his novelist friend Maulawi Nazir Ahmad (*c.* 1836–1912), and his biographer Charles Freer Andrews (*c.* 1871–1940), son of a minister of the Catholic Apostolic Church. In the triangular narrative that follows I have not re-traversed the ground covered by Andrews, except to add to the information here and there, and to give it perhaps a new actuality and perspective. Let me add another caveat. Sharif culture in Delhi's context included a strong imprint of religious plurality and cultural synthesis. Yet, I deal exclusively with the cultural and intellectual trends amongst the Muslim literati largely because they figure time and time again in Andrews' master text. I draw upon this text to illuminate certain neglected features of Delhi's cultural and intellectual ambience.

I

While all the problems of definition and treatment of terms like 'colonialism' 'nationalism', 'revivalism', 'reformism', and 'modernism' have still to be worked out, there is virtual unanimity

13 Maulawi Nazir Ahmad, quoted in Maulawi Muhammad Zaka Ullah, *Tahzibu'l-akhlaq Arya-e Hind ya'ni hunud*, Delhi, 1891, p. 1.

among historians that the colonial impact on Delhi's Muslim elites was by no means the same as on their counterparts in Bengal. While British rule led to the service communities' displacement or impoverishment in Bengal, similar groups in Delhi, having long been connected in one way or the other with the Mughal court and administration, were weakened but not uprooted lock, stock, and barrel. Quite a few individuals did well, and made the colonial bureaucracy work. Of all persons, Zaka Ullah stated that 'it is the Royal House of Victoria that has thus raised my family to its former dignity and affluence.'

The opening lines of Nazir Ahmad's novel, *Ibnu'l-Waqt* ('A Son of the Age'), are: 'what made Ibnu'l-Waqt so prominent was the fact that he adopted the English lifestyle at a time when even to learn English was considered blasphemy and to use English goods an act of apostasy.'[14] Even if the Muslim communities did not necessarily adopt the English lifestyle, they recognized foreign rule as an unchanging fact of life. Thus, Mufti Sadru'd-Din Azurda rose to become the highest official in the Delhi judiciary, while Maulana Fazl-e Haqq Khairabadi (*c.* 1797–1861) obtained a post in the Company's service as *sarrishtadar* in Delhi's civil court. Mirza Asad Ullah Khan Ghalib wrote to the Nawab of Rampur on 13 January 1858, that it was not, after all, such a bad thing to be a *namak-khwar-e sarkar-e angrez*—an eater of the salt of the English government.[15]

The reason why Delhi's Muslim elites retained their position, if not predominance, is because Urdu remained the official language, and a necessary qualification for government employment. Saiyid Ahmad learnt no English, but he could still be employed in the Sadr Amin's office at Delhi (18 January 1837). This meant that representation of such individuals in the administrative apparatus—judicial and executive—was not adversely affected. What is more, a specifically Indo-Muslim culture survived the deleterious effects of colonial rule, and the inner cultural, intellectual, and moral resilience of the Urdu-speaking elites, though enfeebled, was by no means beyond repair.

14 Nazir Ahmad, *Son of the Moment*, translated by Muhammad Zakir, New Delhi, 2002.

15 Peter Hardy, 'Ghalib and the British', in Ralph Russell (ed.), *Ghalib: The Poet and his Age*, Delhi, 1997 rpt., p. 163.

What created this resilience was the commanding position occupied by certain families in Mughal India, and the loss of it moved some to raise the banner of revolt and others to dispute whether or not India under the British was transformed into a *daru'l-harb* (land of war). All this provided a foundation for the popular Muslim belief in the British threat. The fear was authentic, and the aggrieved sections exploited it. The *mujahidin*, for example, played with a smouldering fire that suddenly flared into a conflagration in north-west India.[16] But such outbursts, caused by the almost sudden loss of power and patronage, petered out well before long. Once the wings of the hard-core mujahidin and their sympathizers were clipped, what sustained the service elites' diverse communitarian perspectives was the will to reorder their lives differently. In so doing, they found it easy to adhere to the Islamic value system represented in the persona of the Prophet and the four Khalifas (Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Usman, and 'Ali), rather than the Islamic way of life supposedly threatened by the unbridled intrusion of the West. This they did to almost near perfection, negotiating the Islamic ethical domain with relative ease, and, in the process, proving its relevance and establishing its legitimacy.

What fortified the resilience after 1857, despite the retribution faced by scores of families at the hands of the British, is the high moral ground they occupied even at a time of growing uncertainties, and mounting cultural and intellectual anxieties. Of all the examples assembled by historians, but hardly ever interpreted to convey its true import, is that of Ghalib.

Zaka Ullah's career also illustrates a form of resilience that is, in some ways, unique to him. His life work was his attempt to persuade his co-believers not to abandon the use of their mother tongue: 'to forget it, despise it, is to lose one of the strongest factors in the building up of national character.' Though he knew English, he did not speak it unless it was absolutely necessary. He doggedly set himself the task of translating modern scientific textbooks into the Urdu spoken in north India. Although the verdict has gone against him with Muslim institutions, notably the Aligarh Muslim University, adopting English as the vehicle of higher education, Zaka Ullah's intervention illustrates the self-pride in

16 Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *The Wahhabi Movement in India*, Delhi, 1994; Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge, 1972.

a linguistic-cultural tradition and his creative attempt to safeguard it with the aid of translations of scientific work into Urdu. Translation of English prose into Urdu had already started at the Fort William College in 1800, but gradually spread to Patna, Faizabad, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Delhi, and Ghazipur. This trend gained impetus with the setting up of the Royal Translation Bureau in Lucknow and Haidarabad (founded in 1834), the Vernacular Translation Society of Delhi College (1842), the Scientific Society (1863), and the Christian missionary organizations with their presses at Serampore, Sardhana (Meerut), Mirzapur, Ludhiana and other places.

What I have earlier called resilience (not to be construed as 'arrogance', 'self-conceit' or 'vanity') was sustained in various ways and through different institutions, mosques and traditional schools being just two of them—and found tangible expression in, and that indeed is my next point, Delhi's cultural and intellectual milieu. True, the world was fractured after Lord Lake's entry into Delhi in 1803, but that did not prevent the flowering of music, yunani medicine, Urdu prose and poetry, and historical scholarship. 'High traditions of the past,' commented Andrews, who had access to traditional Muslim families in the old city, 'were kept alive in every home by the stories of religion which mothers taught their children.'[17] Again, what this did was to keep intact the cultural and intellectual fabric, though quite often within the bounds of tradition. It also provided sustenance to the liberal humanism of the nineteenth-century north Indian Urdu-speaking elites, which forged a place for itself in Urdu literature produced mostly at the Delhi College, founded in 1825 with an English principal, J.H. Taylor.

In the first edition of *Asaru's-Sanadid* ('The Vestiges of the Great'), a study of Delhi's ruins and extant monuments published in 1847, Saiyid Ahmad included a chapter on the most successful and well known of the traditional intellectual elites. He extravagantly complimented them:

> People of [this city] do not have their counterparts in any other lands; here every individual combines in him thousands of virtues and is a nosegay of innumerable arts; and one and all they are dedicated to scholarship and writing. Morality is instinctively ingrained in their character that if one were

17 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 12.

to comment on only one aspect of its thousands of books on ethics could be produced. Yet [these scholars] are modest and considerate; their regard for friendship is beyond description, and they are utterly without envy and they never nurse a grudge.[18]

Doubtless, the changes ushered in by the British were real and they did, indeed, heighten cultural and religious fears. But they did not disturb, at least before the 'Mutiny' days, the normal flow and rhythm of life. No wonder, Andrews mentions the 'great abundance' within the city between 1830 and 1850, the 'easy-going existence',[19] and 'an urbanity' existing from close daily contact and kindly feeling.[20] A glimpse of such daily contact is offered by a graphic description of the Delhi elites, their daily lives, and their old boy networks:

Shamsul Ulama Munshi Zaka Ullah left his home from Kucha-e Chalan every evening at 6.00 P.M. to reach the Town Hall in Company Bagh. Maulawi Nazir Ahmad from Batashon ki Gali, Master Piyare Lal from Dariba, and Maulawi Ziauddin from Aksarrehat Kuan would also gather at the same place.... That evening, Munshi Zaka Ullah came to Maulawi Nazir Ahmad's house. I found them exchanging notes. Just then arrived Maulana Azad [1888–1958]. Maulawi Nazir Ahmad owned a Victoria that he used for his outings. All three of us set out on our short journey. In Khari Baoli we met Hali. At Maulana Azad's insistence, he too joined us.... A discussion on poetry ensued. That included a comparison of Zauq and Ghalib. We stopped at Lahori Gate...[followed by a description of the place].[21]

Each individual mentioned herein sought out the society of learned and clever men, and delighted in their converse. Their lives were avowedly based on the assumption that friendship and personal relationships were, by far, the most important thing in life.

Reaching Delhi in 1810, Ghalib found the conflict between the 'traditionalists' in religion and the 'radical' reformers 'raging vigorously'.[22] Indeed, Delhi was the centre of those active and distinguished discussions and investigation that afterwards fructified in the establishment of Delhi College. It was here that knowledge

18 Quoted in Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernisation in India and Pakistan*, New York, 1980, pp. 328–40.

19 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, pp. 4, 5.

20 Ibid., p. 12.

21 Rashidul Khairi, *Ismat*, 1935, *Dilli ki akhri bahar*, pp. 124–5.

22 Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters*, Delhi, 1969, p. 31.

flowed in every direction, commented Maulawi Karimu'd-Din Panipati (*c.* 1821–79), a student at the Oriental Department of Delhi College in 1840 and brother of Maulawi Imamu'd-Din (*c.* 1831–1900), and a convert to Christianity. 'As the mulla makes for the *masjid*, so scholars flocked to Delhi,' he wrote.[23] Leaving aside such exaggerated claims, there is no denying that even though Delhi lost out to Lucknow as the focus of intellectual life, it was still the favourite haunt of innumerable scholars, writers, poets, and musicians. 'This was a golden age for poetry,' declared Karimu'd-Din. 'Everybody from the king down to the beggar was smitten with the poetic craze.'[24]

The intellectual vitality animating Delhi's society led to a slow but steady proliferation of newspapers and magazines. Karimu'd-Din himself rented a place in Hauz Qazi to start a printing press and publish translations of the most well-known Arabic classics. By the 1840s, Delhi had seven printing presses. Facilitated by the establishment of the first litho press around 1835, *Dihli Urdu Akhbar* came out in 1836. It was Delhi's first Urdu newspaper. Five papers with the common name of *Sadiqu'l-Akhbar* were in circulation. *Saidu'l-Akhbar*, started by Saiyid Ahmad Khan's brother in 1837, *Fawaidu'l-Nazirin*, *Qiranu'l-Sa'adain*, and *Mufid Hind* were the other Delhi papers.[25] They were a precursor to the spurt of publications later, especially after *Comrade*, the influential English daily, moved from Calcutta to Delhi. Following the Turko-Italian War in 1911–12, *Comrade* turned Delhi into a storm centre of the pan-Islamic campaign.

All said and done, the pan-Islamic euphoria was a tame affair compared with the fury of 1857–8. Yet, despite the anti-British rhetoric reverberating here and there and the raising of the banner of revolt by Saiyid Ahmad Barelwi (*c.* 1786–1831), the wounds of 1857 were more or less healed within a decade. This provided British officials some breathing space, but, more importantly, it led the Muslim literati—traditional and modern—to take stock of existing attitudes towards a government that had come to occupy the physical spaces to stay and not to return to the cool climes of Great Britain. The self-introspection that took place produced

23 Akhtar Qamber, *The Last Mushairah of Delhi*, Delhi, 1979, p. 39.

24 Ibid., p. 40.

25 'Abdu'l-Salam Khurshid, *Sahafat: Pakistan-o-Hind Mein*, Lahore, 1963, pp. 103–11.

varying reactions. Some chose to decline contentedly in the lap of a feudal but decaying culture, but those exposed to the winds of doctrine blowing from the West announced the tidings of the dawn and pointed the way to the light of the sun. Contrary to the suppositions of several British writers, they engaged with the living present. Ghalib described Saiyid Ahmad's editing of *'Ain-e Akbari*, a major sixteenth-century text by Abu'l Fazl (*c.* 1551–1602), as a futile endeavour to extol the past, which ignored the scientific accomplishments of the British.[26] He was generally put off to find people stuck in the past, oblivious to the present. When people spoke of the 'good old times', Zaka Ullah told them that 'those times, as a whole, were not good, when they are compared with the days in which we are now living. They were full of corruption and decay.'[27] Such was his enthusiasm for the 'new age' that he defined history as *ta'rifu'l-waqt* (appreciation of time).[28] Above all, he privileged the advance in science over past accomplishments: 'such a development we have not witnessed or even dreamt of in any other century.'[29]

The change of dynasty was fixed and ordained by God: 'only by contact with a fresh and younger civilisation could life and vigour flow back into... the community and into India as a whole.'[30] Cynics construed this as subservience to John Company or the Crown, a charge levelled against Saiyid Ahmad as well. But this was no more than a crude attempt to tarnish the reputation of visionary men. When, as an officer in the Education Department, Zaka Ullah attended a Durbar at Delhi, Zaka Ullah avowed to his biographer that he felt degraded by bowing before a foreign ruler.

26 Put aside the *'Ain*, and parley with me;
Open thine the eyes in this world,
And examine the [life] of Englishmen,
Their style, their manner, their trade, and their art.
(Malik, *Saiyyid Ahmad Khan*, p. 58).

27 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 19.

28 Zaka Ullah, *Muqaddimah-e Tarikh-e Hindustan*, Aligarh, 1915, p. 1.

29 Quoted in Irfan Habib, 'Munshi Zaka Ullah and the Vernacularisation of Science in Nineteenth Century India', N.K. Sehgal, S. Sangwan, S. Mohanti (eds), *Uncharted Terrains: Essays on Science Popularisation in Pre-Independence India*, Delhi, 2000, p. 134.

30 Hugh Tinker, 'Between Old Delhi and New Delhi: C.F. Andrews and St. Stephen's in an Era of Transition', Frykenberg (ed.), *Delhi Through the Ages*, p. 358.

And yet he held that the House of Timur was destined to collapse; it pleased him to fancy that Allah had raised the Royal House of Queen Victoria to succeed the Royal House of Jalalu'd-Din Muhammad Akbar.

Being 'Muslim' and observing Islamic practices was not a problem under Pax Brittanica, a point made by Muhammad Isma'il (*c.* 1781–1831), the nephew of the influential *'alim* Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz (*c.* 1746–1824). Saiyid Ahmad pursued the same argument,[31] recommending, though from a different perspective, a modus vivendi with the British. The real and daunting challenge, to which Zaka Ullah and his contemporaries alluded to, was to preserve the essential ingredients of sharif culture, and to defend the corporate Muslim identity not vis-à-vis the Hindu population which posed no serious threat, but against the culturally hegemonic West.

Broadly speaking, this too produced two kinds of responses. Deoband's Daru'l-ulum, an educational haven for Muslims in distress, was typically traditional with all the ingredients of orthodoxy.[32] After an initial flurry of anti-British activity, its founders focused on eliminating 'false accretions' derived from the Sufis and the Shias and Islamizing every aspect of religious and everyday life. Their visions were meant to be a challenge to the world in general, and the West in particular, and as such had become powerful beacons for large numbers of backward and impoverished Muslims living in a cruel and uncertain world. On the contrary, Delhi College and Aligarh's MAO College, with all their ambiguities and ideological fissures, spearheaded a heterodox movement, with a strong emphasis on Western learning and reconciliation with the West. Nonetheless, regardless of the depth of theological dissensions and the incompatibility of their goals, all three institutions shared a common project—to evolve and pursue communitarian strategies in order to negotiate with the reality of British rule.

Ideological rivals within both camps competed to demonstrate their Muslimness, each side accusing its opponents of being overly submissive on the Muslim/Islamic issue. On occasion, the level of

31 He stated that the British government did not interfere with the Muslims in the practice of their religion. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, *Review of Dr Hunter's Indian Mussalmans: Are they Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?*, Banaras, 1872.

32 Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India Deoband, 1860–1900*. With a new preface to the paperback edn, Delhi, 2002.

rancour between them suggested an imminent break, but that did not occur so long as they were united in furthering the yearnings, real or imaginary, of the community. So that when the going was tough, especially during the early phase of the Khilafat movement (1919–20), the Muslim divines (*din-dar*) from Deoband and the worldly men (*dunya-dar*) from Aligarh joined hands to save the Khilafat.[33] Though contemporaries attached much significance to this distinction, it was in effect a spurious one. Whether located in Deoband or Aligarh, individuals and groups freely moved from one domain to the other and traversed each other's terrain uninhibitedly. The sharp divide between the din-dar and the dunya-dar was an imaginary construction based on a textual analysis, and without reflecting the unities between the conflicting worldviews and ideologies. The unity forged during the Khilafat days resulted in more conferences being held, more protests being issued, and more articles in newspapers being published.

What is more, the fraternization of the 'traditionalists' or the 'modernists' in any phase of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries did not mean the dilution of faith or the abrogation of the fundamental tenets of Islam. Zaka Ullah, for example, left off during the greater part of his life many of the outward religious observances. Still, he upheld the Islamic values of moral piety, humility, courtesy, hospitality, generosity, fearlessness, and loyalty to friends.[34] He knew that this heritage was the base of his people and the backbone of their historical existence. Caring towards friends and family, he saved enough for his parents to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, and paid for the education of his younger brother, and the marriage expenses of his three sisters and two brothers. Cutting across class, caste, or territorial boundaries, this constituted the essence of sharif culture. No wonder, Zaka Ullah reminded Andrews of 'the old saints or patriarchs who lived in the presence of God'.[35] 'The purity of his nature,' he stated, 'shone out in his face.'[36]

Government employment or the growing passion for Western learning made no difference to Zaka Ullah's outward manners and

33 Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics*, ch. 6, and Muhammad Ali, *My Life a Fragment: An Autobiographical Sketch of Maulana Muhammad Ali*. Translated and annotated by Mushirul Hasan, Delhi, 1999, p. 80.

34 Zaka Ullah, *Tahzibu'l-akhlaq Arya Hind*, pp. 3, 128.

35 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 138.

36 Ibid., p. 153.

customs that were so much a part of Delhi's sharif environment. His dress, his habits, his domestic life, and his religious life—all that he valued most dearly—remained unchanged.[37] 'Abdu'l-Qadir, the Urdu writer who knew him well during the years 1907 to 1908, recalled: 'In his dress and manner of living he was old fashioned and he stuck to that style, but he was quite progressive in his ideas.'[38] Progressive or not, he remained true to the same social and cultural ideals that shaped the personality of Delhi's Urdu-speaking elites and informed their worldview.

II

Charles Freer Andrews, who came to India to promote the Cambridge University Brotherhood in Delhi, was drawn to Islam, its history and culture soon after reaching Delhi in April 1904.[39] But unlike T.W. Arnold (*c.* 1864–1934) and Theodore Morison (*c.* 1863–1936), who taught at Aligarh and researched on Islam at Aligarh's MAO College,[40] he could not sustain his interest owing to his involvement in the Gandhian movements and his bonding with Rabindranath Tagore (*c.* 1861–1941). Yet the lasting treasure in his recollections of his Delhi years was his close bonding with Zaka Ullah and Nazir Ahmad. 'Delhi will always remain Old Delhi to me,' he wrote, 'on account of the vivid recollection of these two noble old men.' For this reason Delhi became his 'first love'. Nothing could take its place in the romance of Indian life. Teaching at St Stephen's College—an 'Alexandria on the Banks of the Jamuna'—he recalled: 'We had no such brilliant array of students in modern times such as existed in Zaka Ullah's days.'[41]

An ideal biographer must be endowed with a spice of vanity, or in any case, must be thoroughly interested in himself.[42] Now, Andrews was not greatly interested in himself. Instead, he revelled

37 Ibid., p. 118. This is also borne out by Nazir Ahmad's account, pp. xii–xiii.

38 'Abdu'l-Qadir, *Gleanings*, Patna, 1947, pp. 166–7.

39 Tinker, 'Between Old Delhi and New Delhi', Frykenberg (ed.), *Delhi Through the Ages*, p. 359.

40 For Arnold, see Katherine Watt, 'Thomas Walker Arnold and the Re-evaluation of Islam, 1864–1930', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2002.

41 Tinker, *The Ordeal of Love*, p. 33.

42 H.A.L. Fisher, *Pages from the Past*, Oxford, 1939, p. 176.

in meeting Zaka Ullah and his friends and describing details of their lives. No wonder, his autobiography abounds in generous tributes, not only to Zaka Ullah, the vibrant symbol of 'Delhi renaissance', but to his other comrades like Nazir Ahmad and Hakim Ajmal Khan (*c.* 1863–1927). He recalled meeting them each evening at the reading room on the library roof, and discussing subjects of common interest. Such a cultural encounter between a 'Muslim Sage' and an Anglican priest was the first of its kind in Delhi, and was, in many ways, comparable with T.W. Arnold's interactions in Aligarh and later in Lahore where he moved to teach. But, while their exchanges enabled them to uncover the inner fundamental truth of all religions, they did not produce the result Andrews may have desired, that is, reconciliation between Islam and Christianity. They did, however, enable Andrews to understand what it meant to be a Muslim under a colonial dispensation. Others tried, but their efforts fell short of expectations. The colonial mindset did not allow an appreciation of the true nature of Indian Islam. Though policy decisions were, after 1857, finely tuned to draw the estranged Muslim communities into the bureaucratic fold, the intellectual discourses ran parallel to the high politics of the Raj. With some notable exceptions, late nineteenth-century writings on Islam reinforced colonial stereotypes, imaging Indian Islam as inimical to the West and representing its followers as the Other.

It is hard to establish, moreover, whether or not the quiet and unobtrusive dialogue conducted in the lanes of Shahjahanabad led some of Andrews' proselytizing Christian colleagues—who had burst on the Delhi scene with the establishment of various missions—to soften their hostility towards Islam and its adherents. The chances are that it did not. Andrews is silent on the matter. What he is explicit about is that Zaka Ullah and Nazir Ahmad were the best exponents of inter-faith harmony and understanding. Nazir Ahmad, in turn, paid back the compliment and held Zaka Ullah and Andrews as the models for fostering love and understanding between the followers of Islam and Christianity. He talked of Andrews as 'a living example of the same kind of cordiality (during the early years of Islam) existing between Islam and Christianity'.

The rationale behind the constant reference to Andrews' biography is this: although focused on Zaka Ullah, it provides an

entrée into the lives of not two charismatic figures but the trio—Zaka Ullah, Nazir Ahmad, and Andrews, and the intellectual influences which helped to shape their mind. Zaka Ullah of Delhi needs to be revisited also as an evocative introduction to Delhi's cultural, religious, and intellectual life. To the author's credit, he revisits a city bruised by the 'Mutiny', resurrects its painful past, recovers its cultural heritage, and, in the process, discovers the joy of living in it. Sections dealing with the transition from the Mughals to the coming of the British contain a great deal that springs directly from Andrews' own research; but it applies also to the rest of the narrative. He writes from first-hand knowledge.

Hence, the book's scope is considerably wider than the title suggests, for it provides an account of the whole complex of divergent ideas and interpretations to which the revolt of 1857 gave rise, and the hugely complex problems encountered by the Muslim elites' in coping with the alien West. The book's coverage extends to an era that was already receding into the background during Andrews's lifetime. Andrews began collecting materials for his book in 1912, the year he met Tagore. This momentous meeting inspired him to complete the project of writing Zaka Ullah's biography. What Zaka Ullah stood for in Old Delhi, both in education and religion, had its counterpart in Tagore's work at Santiniketan. 'Without any direct link of connection,' he observed, 'Munshi Zaka Ullah's own spirit may be felt there in the poet's ideals as they are being put into practice.' Then, at the beginning of 1914, in answer to an appeal, he went to South Africa, where Gandhi was putting his method of *satyagraha* into practice against the government's treatment of Indians.

Andrews wrote on Zaka Ullah in Calcutta's *The Modern Review* in April 1911, but his pressing engagements interrupted the book's completion. During his voyage from Colombo to Marseilles he put together his notes and drafts, and probably completed the final draft in 1928 at his Cambridge home. It was serialized in *The Modern Review*. When the book finally appeared a year later, priced at 7s. 6d., it received a mixed response in the West. Some introduced a discordant note,[43] but most complimented the author.[44]

43 *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, vol. 116, no. 4, 1929, p. 551.

44 The royalties, as with the profits on the Gandhi biography, were allocated to Santiniketan.

The Moslem World welcomed the biography of a Muslim of the old school, and one who had broad sympathies and a loving heart. 'The background of Delhi before the mutiny', commented the reviewer, 'and that of the foundation of the Aligarh movement are of interest, and the portrait of Zaka Ullah with his religious devotion, Old World courtesy, and gracious hospitality stands out clearly and vividly.'[45] T.W. Arnold commended it in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies: Zaka Ullah belonged, so he wrote, to a 'distinctive type in Muslim society' that seeks knowledge in the best Islamic tradition without any thought of reward and without regard for remuneration. He bemoaned that life of the majority of such persons was, from the very nature of the case, uneventful and the historian does no more than to give a few dates and list their writings. 'The student looks in vain,' concludes Arnold in the same vein as I have done in an earlier section of this essay, 'for a representation of personality and a revelation of the inner character of such men.'[46] Zaka Ullah of Delhi does just that.

III

> The wind has blown away the dust of men
> Unnumbered from your lane:
> Yet your true lovers are not daunted: men
> Come to your threshold still.[47]
>
> —Mir Taqi Mir

Zaka Ullah of Delhi offers many useful insights. One of them relates to 'the rapid efflorescence of men's mind'. The men he had in mind constituted a small but influential group of Muslims in the old city. What made them different from the others was this: they 'did things on their own initiative and thought things out for themselves.' They represented what is commonly described and accepted as 'the Renaissance in the north of India.' Though it came later in time than the Bengal movement and was less enduring in character, their efforts matched the achievements of Ram Mohan Roy [*c.* 1772–1832] in Bengal.'[48]

45 *The Moslem World*, vol. 20, 1930, p. 214.
46 *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, London, pp. 623–4.
47 Ralph Russell, *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature*, London, p. 48.
48 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, pp. 38, 46, 46.

The theory of a Delhi renaissance is a grand myth invented by no other than Andrews. On his first visit to India and during his first exposure to Delhi, this graduate of Cambridge's Pembroke College discovered a general enlivenment of the city. He noticed the development of Urdu prose, the translation of scientific works in that language, the flowering of scientific curiosity, and the growth of the printing press. The Delhi College, though now a shadow of its glorious past, still offered hope to those who valued Western education. Andrews, therefore, describes these features with much feeling and eloquence.

Though Delhi College's development remained a subject of contention, it was a major educational enterprise. In 1854, it had 333 students, of whom 112 were Muslims. It had an English branch where English language and literature and modern European sciences were taught and an Oriental branch in which Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit were taught, along with geography, mathematics, and the sciences. Above everything else, it had been a nursery of science teaching, and a catalyst of major works on scientific subjects.[49] The doctrines of ancient philosophy taught through the medium of Arabic verse were 'cast in the shade before the more reasonable and experimental theories of modern science. The old dogma... that the earth is the fixed centre of the universe was generally laughed at by the higher students of the Oriental as well as by those of the English Department of the College.'[50]

Zaka Ullah defined science as 'a knowledge which has truth, an absolute truth, and nothing but the truth'.[51] He used to tell Andrews 'with kindling eyes how eagerly these scientific lectures were followed, and how, after each lecture, the notes used to be studied, over and over again, and copied out by many hands. It was like entering into a wholly undiscovered hemisphere of the human mind.' Enthusiastic teachers also taught the young students. They were allowed to experiment with unknown chemical gases. They were invited to dip into the mysteries of Magnetism, which was just then coming to the front as a freshly discovered

49 For example, *Mazharu'l-mazamin* by Mazharu'l- Haqq. He was a tutor of the nawab of Pataudi.

50 Ram Chandra, quoted in Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 39.

51 Irfan Habib, 'Zaka Ullah', p. 134.

science. 'There was much yet to come; but these things formed actually for them a new world.'[52]

Quickened by the breath of the new curiosity, Delhi College achieved much more than encouraging scientific studies. It contributed to the development of Urdu prose as a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge. It mediated between Eastern and Western cultures and mentalities, and did so in the vernacular, contributing to an Urdu-speaking and reading public that belonged to different religious persuasions.[53] Even though hot-headed mullahs, theologians and publicists sustained their campaign against Western education and its supposed negative impact on Muslim beliefs and practices, Delhi College embarked upon changes in the traditional academic curriculum and created a climate for fostering liberal thought and the rational spirit. Its leading lights lived with the sense that they were making history, and creating a new society. For its alumni the college remained 'a home of pleasant memories in the far distant past', and retained its liberal, scientific, and humanistic spirit. 'If I had not studied in Delhi College,' stated Nazir Ahmad, 'I would have been a Maulawi, narrow and bigoted.'[54]

These were, admittedly, major gains. But they were not good enough to support the theory of a 'Delhi renaissance'. Even the impact of 'New Learning' engendered by Delhi College was short-lived and much less far-reaching in its ultimate effect. Although the college blazed the trail in initiating a dual system of education, its merger with Lahore's Government College in April 1877 brought to an end the dream of its founders. The flowering of science came to a standstill, while the liberal and rational spirit was overtaken by strident communitarian aspirations.

The sound and fury of 1857 overshadowed the college's impressive beginning. While the clouds of uncertainties loomed large on the horizon before its actual closure, the college was attacked; its rich collection of manuscripts and books burnt down, and the mutineers killed Taylor, the English principal. By the time a temporary revival occurred from 1864 to 1877, Delhi College had lost

52 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, pp. 42–3.

53 Gail Minault, 'Qiran Al-Saadain', in Jamal Malik (ed.), *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters*, p. 277.

54 Quoted in Narayani Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires, 1803–1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth, New Delhi*, p. 131.

its distinct personality. One of the principal reasons was that Urdu, a major catalyst for Delhi's cultural and intellectual regeneration, ceased to be the medium of instruction. This was, in retrospect, the beginning of an inglorious era in the history of the Urdu language. Though Urdu prospered in certain ways until Independence and Partition, it could not regain its pre-eminence in the administration and bureaucracy. The language being squeezed out of the school and college curriculum hastened its demise. As in Bengal where English substituted Persian in 1835, English eventually replaced Urdu in Delhi.

Even at the best of times, the so-called Delhi renaissance found no resonance in the lives of the common Muslims. A movement associated with such famous names and full of so momentous a future passed through a region without effecting a major transformation in outlook. In this respect, the influence of ideas was disappointingly small in relation to the possibilities. Here in Delhi, as indeed elsewhere, a great extension of the scientific domain did not take place. It remained confined to the pages of Saiyid Ahmad's *Tahzibu'l-akhlaq* or the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*. Nor did the reach of the Delhi renaissance or the many-sided outbursts of intellectual energy extend beyond Delhi. One indication of this is that people like Zaka Ullah and Nazir Ahmad, though respected during their lifetime for their creativity and scholarship, vanished into the mists of history. There can, indeed, be no more significant illustration of the way in which they were forgotten even during their lifetime than the Muslim League session at Delhi in December 1910 making no mention of Zaka Ullah's death a month ago in the same city. The *Tribune of Lahore*, published from Lahore, a city where Zaka Ullah's writings were read and appreciated, carried an obituary reference of Major Goold-Adams (8 November 1910), but not to Zaka Ullah.

IV

> Faith stops me, if impiety pulls me towards itself;
> Ka'ba is behind me, the church is in front of me.
>
> —Ghalib

Zaka Ullah of Delhi is important in yet another respect. Andrews, the author, does not hesitate to develop his own ideas of a pluralist

historical trend far beyond the purely political sphere, and his study illustrates very well the strength and the weakness of the composite traditions that he celebrates with such abandon. Thus, he talks of 'the amalgamation of customs and usages' among the Hindus and Muslims alike, and refers to fairs, *melas*, and other forms of festivities as expressions of plurality and composite living.[55] In all of this, Zaka Ullah appears as a presiding deity over Delhi's multicultural and multireligious society, and Andrews writes with feeling, if sometimes repetitively, on his catholic outlook, tolerance, and forbearance.

Andrews points out that Zaka Ullah tried bridging the gulf separating the two religious communities, though he exaggerates in describing him as 'one of God's peace-makers who brought unity among the children of men by his goodness and love'.[56] What he is right about is that Delhi's grand old man was, as Nazir Ahmad put it, 'untainted by that spirit of religious bigotry, prejudice, or superstition', and that he did not draw religious boundaries in his personal and professional conduct.[57] Every evening when Pandit Tulsi Ram's family lighted the lamps to worship, they included the name of Zaka Ullah, in the prayer repeated at that time, along with the names of other close family members.[58]

In the last eight chapters, Andrews demonstrates how Zaka Ullah's reactions to the post-1857 developments conformed to the highest standards expected of a wise and intelligent man. He fills out the story by material derived from friends and family that bear on his personal and professional life. He, thus, endeavours to establish the greatness of his hero, his secularity, and the nobility of his mission. There is, in all this, a clear, honest, and unaffected affinity between the biographer and his subject.

Biographers idealize their subjects, and why should they not if they do genuinely inspire them. Andrews' strenuous efforts to establish Zaka Ullah's 'secular' credentials carried a special meaning and signification. Essentially, he used Zaka Ullah to fortify the era's secular ideologies that were being assailed by Hindu and

55 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 15.
56 Ibid., p. 129.
57 Nazir Ahmad, in Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, pp. xiii–iv.
58 Ibid., p. 145.

Muslim revitalization movements. He regarded his legend as a symbol—and often a very apt symbol—of the Gandhian initiatives to promote Hindu–Muslim fraternity and understanding. In this sense, Zaka Ullah of Delhi has a single theme.

Yet, could such scholarly interventions, though timely, praiseworthy, and important in themselves, foster Hindu–Muslim togetherness either in Delhi or elsewhere? The politics of representation had created a wedge and undermined the inter-community front created by his mentor, Gandhi, during the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation campaigns. The conflict was more than a struggle for power and patronage; it was also a battle for myths, religious faith, and history. Groups amongst Hindus and Muslims fought it out with a primal fervour that led inevitably to violence. This collision of passions and politics lit a dreadful fire—few knew this as well as Andrews did. Yet Andrews, a man imbued with a missionary zeal and fervour, could not abandon the hope of Hindu–Muslim reconciliation. By writing Zaka Ullah's biography he hoped to provide the healing touch and offer a role model worthy of emulation. Hence, Nazir Ahmad's optimism:

> Far-sighted, tolerant, and wise men, like Munshi Zaka Ullah, have already in their own lives found out the art of avoiding these things [religious disputes of various kinds]. They have learnt how to prevent beforehand these painful religious disputes. Their lives are living examples of harmony and concord... After a time, it is hoped that those newspapers that are notorious for exciting bitter contention and hatred between the two communities—the Hindu and the Musalman—will vanish and come to nothing. Every good man must wish for this to happen.[59]

The prophecy did not come true; Hindu-Muslim squabbles intensified after the death of Zaka Ullah and Nazir Ahmad. Their differences were never-ending, surfacing in almost every arena. Both 'Muslim' and 'Hindu' politics made demagogic use of religious symbols; both were easily drawn into extreme positions and lost control of events. But the sentiment expressed by Nazir Ahmad mirrored yet another contemporary reality, that is the presence of individuals who were unmoved by the communal claptrap and cherished, what in modern parlance is described as, multiculturalism.

59 *Ibid.*, p. xv.

V

> The walls and doorways of my house are mourning
> Are as meadows overgrown with grass;
> Where is this spring, why ask how autumn looks?
>
> —Ghalib

Nazir Ahmad's fellow traveller 'on life's difficult journey' was none other than Khan Bahadur Shamsu'l-Ulama Maulawi Muhammad Zaka Ullah. Both were prized products of Delhi College. Nazir Ahmad studied Urdu and Arabic, whereas 'Master' Ram Chandra (*c.* 1821–80), a recent convert to Christianity, 'sowed in his [Zaka Ullah's] mind and heart a seed of another kind, namely a love for mathematics.'[60] At a time when scepticism towards Western learning prevailed, Ram Chandra's growing influence on Zaka Ullah raised some eyebrows, though fears of his conversion to Christianity were ill founded. Nazir Ahmad, who was himself criticized by the Muslim orthodoxy for being drawn to Christianity under the magic spell of Andrews, asserted that his friend was 'a strict Unitarian Musalman, trusting in one God with His full attributes as understood in Islam.'[61] He had himself invited the wrath of religious conservatives by writing on the wives of the Prophet of Islam (*Ummahatu'l-Umma*) and introducing, in his translation of the Koran in Urdu parenthetical clauses here and there to elucidate the meaning of the text. Andrews, too, clarified that 'never by any word that passed from his lips in my presence did I gather that he regarded himself as anything else than a true Muslims.'[62]

Zaka Ullah may have been attracted to some aspects of Christianity under Ram Chandra's influence, but Andrews endeavoured to dispel this impression. Anxious to enhance rather than damage his friend's reputation, he wanted Zaka Ullah's mission to be understood and not misconstrued. The need was all the more great in the late-1920s, the years Andrews spent writing his book. because at the time of writing his book Hindu-Muslim relations in Delhi and elsewhere had reached their lowest watermark. The Nehru Committee Report, published just a few months after

60 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. ix.
61 Nazir Ahmad, in Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. x.
62 Ibid., p. 149.

he sailed for London in May 1928, fuelled tensions and deepened political and cultural anxieties.[63] In this climate, Andrews invoked the ideals cherished by Zaka Ullah throughout his long public career.

Born in a house in Kucha Balaqi Begum, situated between the Jama Masjid and the Delhi Palace on 20 April 1832, Zaka Ullah had an aristocratic Turkish ancestry. His grandfather Hafiz Muhammad Sana' Ullah was a man of considerable stature and learning, and it was his overbearing influence that shaped the young Zaka Ullah's mind. Equally, his father Hafiz Sana' Ullah's piety and saintly character earned him much esteem. Like his ancestors who had gain respect in society as teachers in the Mughal court, Sana' Ullah tutored the youngest son of Bahadur Shah Zafar (r. 1837–58), the fallen hero of the short-lived 'Mutiny'. He even offered him refuge when parts of Delhi were ablaze, and the British bayonets were out in the open hunting the recalcitrant descendants of Akbar (*c.* 1556–1605) and Shah Jahan (*c.* 1628–58). But the prince would have known that his fate was sealed. He escaped to Jaipur, from where he was taken a prisoner to Rangoon.

Beginning in Meerut, a faceless town unscarred by the movement of ideas in history, the revolt in Delhi burst like a bubble. British troops, having suffered some initial reverses, seized Qudsia Bagh and Ludlow Castle on September 8; three days later they bombarded and destroyed the Kashmiri Gate bastion. Ghalib's Delhi was stormed on 14 September, the day he noted:

> As for the writer of these words, his heart did not quake, nor did his steps falter. I stayed where I was, saying, 'I have committed no crime and need pay no penalty. The English do not slay the innocent, nor is the air of this uncongenial to me. Why should I fall a prey to groundless fancies and wander stumbling from one place to place? Let me sit in the same deserted corner blending my voice with my lamenting pen, while the tears fall from my eyelashes to mingle with the words of blood I write.'[64]

While Ghalib busied himself writing the *Dastambu* ('A Popsy of Flowers') and vacillating in his attitudes towards the British, the starry-eyed representatives of John Company captured Bahadur Shah at Humayun's tomb. His crown was removed; his expensive

63 Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885–1931*, New Delhi, 1991.

64 Russell and Islam, *Ghalib*, p. 141.

robe discarded from his person. He would have felt indignant and humiliated, but his protest, if any, was of no avail. Tried between 27 January and 9 March 1858, Bahadur Shah was found guilty, transported to Rangoon in October, and imprisoned there. The Mughal emperors—from Babur (*c.* 1483–1530) to Jahangir (r. c.1605–27)—wrote their memoirs. None would be written hereafter. The royal family had been, finally, edged off the stage. British and Sikh soldiers had already ransacked the palace in Lal Qila (Red Fort), once the home of Shah Jahan, and carried away the valuables. On 20 September 1857, Jama Masjid was taken over. Officers and soldiers clambered up the minaret and 'saw the whole city and country like a map below our feet; all Delhi was ours.' They danced about, drank beer and brandy, and lit fires in the mosque. More celebration took place at the home of Colonel Baird Smith. Midnight came, corks popped, fireworks exploded.[65] The city's 160,000 inhabitants were driven out into the open. Every citizen wanting to return after expulsion had to pay a fine: Muslims paid 25 per cent of the value of their real estate, Hindus only 10 per cent. Thousands were killed after perfunctory trials or none at all. The mutineers and other rebels were executed. They were strung up on a platform in front of the Kotwali in batches of a dozen at a time.

Hali, who fled back to Panipat on the outbreak of the revolt and was robbed of all his possessions save a Koran tied in a scarf around his neck, told his audience in 1874: 'do not go into the ruins of Delhi. At every step priceless pearls lie buried beneath the dust...'[66] Mian Muhammad Amin Panjakush, an excellent writer, and Maulawi Imam Bakhsh, whose nom de plume was Sahba'i, and his two sons were shot dead, and their bodies thrown into the Yamuna. Maulawi Muhammad Baqar (*c.* 1810–57), educated at Delhi College and proprietor of *Dihli Urdu Akhbar*, was arrested and executed. His son Muhammad Husain 'Azad' (*c.* 1830h–1910), a Delhi College graduate (1854), was expelled from his house at bayonet point. 'The world turned black before my eyes.... Abandoning a well-furnished house, with twenty-two half-dead souls I left the house—or rather, the city. And the words fell from my lips, 'Hazrat Adam left Paradise; Delhi is a paradise too. I'm his

65 David Blomfield (ed.), *Lahore to Lucknow: The Indian Mutiny Journal of Arthur Moffat Lang*, London, 1992, pp. 57, 97.

66 Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires*, pp. xviii–xix.

descendant—why shouldn't I leave Delhi?' In short, I became a wanderer, and God knows how and where I found myself.'[67] Ghalib told his friend:

> I write a letter to Munshi Nabi Bakhsh Sahib and receive his reply, and today I get a letter from you, and your name is still Munshi Hargopal and your *takhallus* Tufta, and the city I live in is still called Delhi and this *muhalla* is still named Ballimaron *muhalla*—yet one not one of the friends of that former birth is to be found. By God, you may search for a Muslim in this city and not find one—rich, poor, and artisans alike are gone. Such as here are not Delhi people.[68]

Ghalib stayed in Delhi for the entire period between the coming of the mutineers from Meerut on 11 May and the successful British assault upon the city on 14 September. 'The tumult of arrests and killings' reached his lane, renting 'the heart of every man with fear.' He wrote bitterly of the execution of the three nawabs of three small estates in Delhi's neighbourhood. His brother's house, close to his, was plundered. His family went away. This was another sorrow, another calamity that descended on him like an avalanche. 'We live,' the poet added, 'in anxious thought for bread and water, and die in anxious thought for shroud and grave.'[69] Delhi had become a city without a ruler, a slave without a master, a garden without a gardener.[70] The *Fughan-e Dihli* ('The Lament of Delhi'), a collection of 40 poems on Delhi's ruin and plunder, says it all.

This was Zaka Ullah's Delhi, a city where everybody could have echoed Ghalib's sentiment—*Main Andalib Gulshan-e na-afrida hun* ('I am the Nightingale of the Garden Uncreated'). The varying fortunes of the city in war and peace become part of the general sweep of Delhi's social history. But for an individual whose family had been closely connected with the Delhi court, the eclipse of the Mughals and Bahadur Shah's unceremonious removal caused a great psychological blow.[71] For a family brought up with notions

67 Muhammad Husain Azad, *Ab-e hayat: Shaping the Canons of Urdu Poetry*. Translated and edited by Frances Pritchet in association with Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Delhi, 2001, p. 367.

68 Russell and Islam, *Ghalib*, p. 151.

69 Ibid., p. 143.

70 Quoted in Peter Hardy, 'Ghalib and the British', in Russell (ed.), *Ghalib: the Poet and his Age*, p. 68.

71 Rajat Kanta Ray, 'Race, Religion and Realm: The Political Theory of "The Reigning India Crusade", 1857', in Mushirul Hasan and Narayani Gupta (eds), *India's Colonial Encounter: Essays in Memory of Eric Stokes*, New Delhi, 1993.

of stability and political acquiescence, it was deeply embarrassing to discover, in the words of Zaka Ullah, that 'Hindustan had become the arena of the mighty whirlwind and the blazing fire.'[72] For a family steeped in learning and scholarship, the loss of the city's great libraries was most painful. One of them belonged to Nawab Ziau'd-Din Ahmad Khan of Loharu: it had supplied the manuscripts from which Henry Elliot compiled his eight volumes of translated excerpts on the history of India.[73]

Zaka Ullah did not write anything resembling *An Account of the Loyal Mohamedans of Indians of India* (1860–1) or *Asbab-e baghawat-e Hind* (1858), but 'the shock of those last Mutiny days was beyond all bearing.'[74] Imam Bakhsh, shortlisted in 1842 along with Ghalib and Momin Khan 'Momin' (1800–52) for an appointment in Delhi College, taught him Persian and Arabic. When Saiyid Ahmad lived in Delhi from 1846 to 1854 as Sadr Amin, it was he who assisted him in writing *Asaru's-Sanadid* that won him the honour of a fellowship of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1864. Zaka Ullah revered Imam Bakhsh, and mourned deeply his loss. To his students at the Muir Central College in Allahabad (established in 1872),[75] he would say that he felt as if Imam Bakhsh was present even while lecturing to them.[76] The Maulawi was dead, but his other icon, the mathematician Ram Chandra escaped the mob fury. A prominent Delhi citizen told Andrews how when Delhi was taken over by the mutineers from Meerut at about 10 o'clock, he met Zaka Ullah hurrying towards Delhi College in order to save Ram Chandra. But the professor had already escaped in disguise to the open country.

Family hardships compounded personal losses and tragedies. Zaka Ullah's house near the Red Fort was demolished, and the family sought refuge among the tombs of Nizamu'd-Din Auliya (*c.* 1238–1325), some three miles away from the city wall.[77] Their property was confiscated without any compensation, and on one

72 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 145.

73 Francis Robinson, 'The Muslims of Upper India and the Shock of the Mutiny', in Hasan and Gupta (eds), *India's Colonial Encounter*, p. 193.

74 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 75.

75 For details, see H.R. Nevill, *Allahabad: A Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1911, vol. 23, p. 147.

76 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 60.

77 This is where Ghalib was buried on 15 February 1869.

occasion the father and son, though eventually let off, were summoned by Captain Wilson to explain their antecedents. In such trying times, his mother sold her ornaments to buy books for her children. This must have caused great pain to a sharif family, but then her children's education was her first and foremost priority. Education was a family asset, as it had always been from the time Zaka Ullah's ancestors moved from Ghazni into Hindustan. It was the passport to success, the key to Zaka Ullah's own fame and eminence.

Muslims proudly quote two *hadis* (Prophet's traditions), of which one makes it the duty of every Muslim to seek knowledge, while the other is the widely quoted counsel of perfection, which bids man 'seek knowledge, even if it be in China.' Zaka Ullah did so throughout his life. He taught in Delhi College, and Agra College (1855–69),[78] and at Allahabad's Muir Central College (1872–86) as 'Professor of Vernacular Science and Literature'. He headed the Delhi Normal School, and served as deputy inspector of schools in Bulandshahar and Moradabad (1869–72). The contacts he would have made on these occasions and his visits to conferences and meetings qualified him to interpret to his fellow-countrymen historical and contemporary issues.

Though he led a busy and hectic life, teaching, reading, and writing were his preoccupation. This extraordinary tenacity had brought him so close to Imam Bakhsh and Ram Chandra. His clear and sharp intellect enlarged his friendship circle that included Nazir Ahmad, Maulawi Karim Bakhsh, Rai Piyare Lal 'Ashob', Kanhya Lal, Mir Babar 'Ali, Master Nand Kishore, and the Arabic scholar Maulawi Ziau'd-Din, who testified against Ghalib in a libel suit against Miyan Aminu'd-Din of Patiala.[79] His affinity with creative writers and scholars created a powerful bonding with his Delhi College colleagues, Muhammad Husain 'Azad', Hali, a lifelong friend, and Maulawi Sami Ullah Khan (*c.* 1834–1908) whose biography he completed just a year before his death in 1910.[80]

78 The Agra College was founded in 1823. For details, see H.R. Nevill, *Agra: A Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1921, vol. 8. pp. 130–1.

79 Russell and Islam, *Ghalib*, pp. 361–2.

80 Zaka Ullah, *Sawanih Umri: Hajji Muhammad Sami Ullah Bahadur, C.M.G.*, Delhi, 1327 AH/1907. According to Zaka Ullah, Maulawi Muhammad Hamid Ullah, son of Maulawi Sami Ullah and an employee in India Office, London, first mooted the idea of a Muhammadan Educational Conference. This view is hotly

During his last fatal illness, he sent messages through Andrews to Nazir Ahmad, then flickering like a flame.

Zaka Ullah received honours, recognition, and appointments for his loyalty to the Crown. The charm and simplicity of his personality and the weight of his scholarship conquered from the first the admiration of those who knew him. He was a key figure in the Scientific Society started at Ghazipur on 9 January 1864, and a regular contributor to Saiyid Ahmad's *Tahzibu'l-akhlaq*, *Ma'arif*, *Makhzan*, and Kanpur's *Zamana*. He served as vice-president of *Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu*, founded in 1903 to foster the learning and instruction of Urdu, and it was probably at his insistence that Delhi hosted the 1894 session of the All-India Muslim Educational Conference.[81]

A close friend of Saiyid Ahmad, he played a large part in the Aligarh College affairs, serving as trustee from 1892 onwards, and as member of the Board of Management. It was he who supported the idea of founding the college at Aligarh and not elsewhere.[82] But, then, serious difference of opinion occurred over the diffusion of knowledge in Urdu. At first, Saiyid Ahmad strongly advocated the teaching of sciences through the medium of the vernacular, but later he endorsed the official line that 'the great object of the Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the nations of India.'[83] Zaka Ullah differed with Saiyid Ahmad, agreeing with many later theorists in thinking that the medium of instruction should have been Urdu not English. He also did not share his outright rejection of traditional schooling;[84] instead, he believed in achieving some degree of synthesis between the traditional and modern syllabus.

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contested. 'Abdu'r-Rashid Khan, *The All India Muslim Educational Conference: Its Contribution to the Cultural Development of Indian Muslims 1886–1947*, Karachi, 2001, pp. 20–1.

81 Saiyid Ahmad to Members, Managing Committee, Muhammadan Educational Conference, 21 July 1894, Atiq Ahmad Siddiqi (ed.), *Sir Syed's Correspondence*, Aligarh, 1990, p. 202.

82 Zaka Ullah to Saiyid Ahmad, n.d, ibid.

83 Graham, *Life and Work of Syed Ahmed Khan*, pp. 313, 314.

84 *Report of the members of the Select Committee for the Better Diffusion and Advancement of the learning among the Muhammadans of India* (trans.), 1872, quoted in C.H. Philips (ed.), *The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858 to 1947, Select Documents*, London, 1962, p. 179.

While contesting some aspects of the Saiyid's educational blueprint, Zaka Ullah shared the overall perspectives of his lifelong friend, and backed his initiatives.[85] Both believed, as Zaka Ullah stated, that 'without a full acceptance of the results of modern science and a full knowledge of them also, the East must inevitably fall behind the West...'[86] Both held out the ideal of Muslim regeneration in unison with rather than in opposition to the British,[87] and for this reason they developed a strong aversion to the Indian National Congress founded in December 1885. The Saiyid stridently criticized its activities, whereas Zaka Ullah, despairing of public affairs and preferring instead the peaceful pastures of knowledge, couched his protest in mild terms.

Both rejected pan-Islamism. During their lifetime the pan-Islamic surge threatened to wreck their effort to prop up the Anglo-Muslim alliance in India; so they wanted to cut the silver cord that tied Muslims to the international community of 'all believers', personified in the Khilafat. Both spoke against the Turcophilia among some of their co-religionists, arguing that they were legally bound to obey the writ not of an external Khalifa but of the British Indian government.

Zaka Ullah maintained a low profile in public life, allowing his icon, Saiyid Ahmad, to steal the limelight. The Saiyid was an indefatigable letter-writer; Zaka Ullah was not. A very private person, he was also too shy and nervous to speak in public. Like 'a nightingale of a thousand songs' before his friends, he was 'tongue-tied, like a mute, in the presence of an audience.'[88] He was a man born to follow, not to lead. He needed a hero; and he found one in the great Aligarh reformer.[89] He was too sage, too tolerant, to force his way to worldly distinction.

85 In his evidence before the Education Commission (1883), Saiyid Ahmad opined, 'Vernacular education is no more regarded as sufficient for our daily affairs of life. It is only of use to us in our private and domestic affairs.... It is English education which is urgently needed by the country, and by the people in their daily life.'

86 Irfan Habib, 'Zaka Ullah', p. 134.

87 There are eight letters from Saiyid Ahmad to Zaka Ullah in Shaikh Muhammad Ismail Panipati (ed.), *Maktubat-e Sir Saiyyid*, Lahore, 1972, vol. 1, pp. 207–12.

88 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 141.

89 'His eyes used to lit up with eager enthusiasm at the mention of the name of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan', wrote Andrews. 'There could be no question who was Munshi Zaka Ullah's greatest living hero; it was Sir Saiyid Ahmad.' Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 95.

VI

> We kept writing the blood-drenched narratives of that madness
> Although our hands were amputated in the process.
>
> —Ghalib

It was characteristic of his energy that Zaka Ullah had time to concentrate on his personal research and the motivation to write books. He started writing at the age of 19, and, by 1910, he had published 147 books with infinite skill and patience. Though their quality is uneven, they illustrate the span and scholarly nature of his activities. His first work was on playing cards and chess, an entertaining guide to forms of leisure and recreation in early nineteenth-century Delhi. *Tuhfatu'l-hisab*, the book published next, dealt with modern mathematics based on questions and answers. At that time, Zaka Ullah was only 19 years old. He also wrote two books on measuring, one of them—*Risala-e 'ilm-e masahat*—was commissioned by Aligarh's Scientific Society and Roorkee's Thomson Civil Engineering College. Some of his later works are solid enough to be useful for reference, and to deserve a long life. But Urdu's virtual disappearance from India has made that impossible. Most of Zaka Ullah's books have either vanished from our libraries, or gather dust in bookshelves.

'Abdu'l-Qadir claims that Zaka Ullah wrote about 70,000 pages of printed matter, which appeared in about 100 volumes. Besides, he contributed 10,000 pages to numerous newspapers, magazines, and periodicals. Several thousand pages of manuscript were found in boxes at the time of his death.[90] How could he produce so much? Zaka Ullah himself credited his mother for imposing a strict regimen that enabled him to write four pages every day of his life. Like other women in her generation, she accepted her role as mother, wife, and housekeeper who saw to her husband's needs, and to the cleaning, cooking, mending, and childrearing. According to 'Abdu'l-Qadir:

> She used to get up at about 3.30 a.m., to offer her tahajjud [optional prayers], which were followed by the morning prayers, after which her daily routine

90 Qadir, *Gleanings*, p. 162. For a summary of Zaka Ullah's publications, Rafat Jamal, *Zaka Ullah: Hayat aur Unke 'Ilmi aur Adabi Karname*, Delhi, 1990, pp. 179–244, and Irfan Habib, 'Munshi Zaka Ullah', pp. 141–3.

of household started. She used to have a nap for half an hour between 8.30 and 9 a.m., after finishing the important part of her morning's work.... She made a point of doing some spinning every day and kept a strict discipline in the house.... Maulawi Zaka Ullah used to say that he owed to his mother's regular habits his regularity and the methodical nature of his work.'[91]

Zaka Ullah was in full blast in the 1890s. He published *Tahzibu'l-akhlaq Arya Hind ya'ni hunud* ('Morals and Culture of the Hindus': 1890), *Muhasinu'l-akhlaq* ('Laudable Morals'), a work that takes an explicit position against early marriage, *Mukarramu'l-akhlaq* ('Venerable Morals': 1891), *Ta'limu'l-akhlaq* ('Moral Education': 1892), and *Ta'limu'l-khisa'l* ('Guide to Character-Building': 1892). *Ta'limu'l-intizamam* ('Guide to Education': 1892), a comparatively small book of 110 pages, deals with savings (*kifayat she'ari*), investment, the judicious use of material resources, and charity. These have a strong moralistic tone; their style is often technical rather than simple. The specialized vocabulary used in *Muhasinu'l-akhlaq*, a book of 515 pages, makes it inaccessible. Some of his other writings, too, are in part rather specialized for the general reader, in part rather elementary for the professional historian.[92]

In the 1870s, Zaka Ullah published *Silsilatu'l-'ulum*, a series of 23 volumes of mathematical works in Urdu. Published under the aegis of Aligarh's Scientific Society and the Scientific Society of Bihar, the publication and sale of the first 17 volumes was organized by Saiyid Ahmad. Copies were bought by, among others, the nizam of Hyderabad and the maharaja of Patiala.[93] Zaka Ullah, in turn, generously allowed the MAO. College to publish and prescribe any of his publications.[94] Four of the volumes are translations of Euclid (about 300 BC), the Greek geometer who founded a school in Alexandria and whose chief work, *Elements* (13 books) is the basis of many later works in geometry. In addition, Zaka Ullah produced four treatises on plane and one on spherical trigonometry, the latter a translation of the best work on the subject by the English mathematician, Issac Todhunter (*c.* 1820–84), author of

91 Ibid., pp. 165–6, and the account of his contemporary Asghar 'Abdu'r-Razzaq Kanpuri in Asghar Abbas (ed.), *Intikhab Zaka Ullah*, Lucknow, 1983, pp. 8–9.

92 Zaka Ullah, *Muhasinu'l-akhlaq*, Delhi, 1891, p. 110.

93 Saiyid Ahmad to Raja Jai Kishan Das, 19 April 1871, Yusuf Husain (ed.), *Selected Documents from the Aligarh Archives*, Aligarh, 1967, pp. 104–5.

94 Zaka Ullah to Saiyid Ahmad, 26 February 1873, ibid., p. 239.

standard textbooks on mathematics, and treatises on the history of mathematical theories of probability, attraction, elasticity. He translated Todhunter's *Differential and Integral Calculus*, as also the school manuals by Galbraith and Haughton of the Queen's College in Ireland. All these translations are remarkable for careful and exact rendering. They are free from inelegance of speech, and the technical terms employed are those commonly received. The figures are drawn correctly, indeed remarkably so, considering that they are lithographed.

The translation of such and so many mathematical works was a monumental feat. The government thought so: 'The appearance of a series of mathematical works in Urdu just at this time is a welcome support to the argument for teaching science in the vernacular, and I can only say that I want no better books for a thorough course of pure mathematics than those now under review (emphasis added). The course contained in the *Silsilatu'l-'ulum* is sufficient to carry the student up to the B.A. standard...'[95] Not surprisingly, Zaka Ullah was rewarded for 'the industry displayed in the preparation of this excellent series of scientific works, and for his public spirit in publishing them.' The Director of Public Instruction added:

> I think the highest degree of credit attaches to the honest and careful completion of the task he has undertaken. The labour has been very great, and no small amount of mathematical talent appears in the style and quality of the work. It bears the character of a scientific work rather than a literary performance, but as an important aid to education...[96]

Zaka Ullah's well-known biographies are on his friend Maulawi Sami Ullah (in two parts) and on the first half of Curzon's viceroyalty (*Curzon nama*: 1907). He transferred his personal loyalty to Queen Victoria, whom he idealized in *Victoria nama*. Her place in history was side by side with that of Asoka and Akbar, an analogy that became an axiom of his historical thinking.[97] These

95 The above summary and quotations are based on Memo no. 10 of 3 May 1872 issued by the Secretary, North-West Provinces under Article XIII entitled 'Meritorious Books by Native Authors', *Statistical Abstract*, pp. 280–1.

96 Secretary to Director of Public Instruction, North-Western Provinces, 15 June 1872, *Statistical Abstract*, p. 282.

97 Muhammad Aslam Syed, *Muslim Response to the West: Muslim Historiography in India 1857–1914*, Islamabad, 1988, p. 60.

books, with excerpts from contemporary sources, contain much useful information and lively comments. But judged from the standpoint of biographical literature, they are much less interesting than the works of Shibli Numani (*c.* 1837–1914).

Tarikh-e Hindustan, published by Muhammad 'Ata Ullah in the Old City, is Zaka Ullah's magnum opus. In all, he scripted 7169 pages, a truly laborious feat. Tempting the reader's curiosity and reminding him of the surprising range of his interest in history writing, the first volume appeared in 1897. The *Aligarh Institute Gazette* reissued it in 1915. Providing a full and painstaking account starting from Arabia with the rise and expansion of Islam and concluding with the Arab conquest of Sindh and the Delhi Sultanate (*c.* 1206–65), his preface is erudite. The sections dealing with his didactic and utilitarian purpose of history, though unoriginal, fosters among students an appreciation of history and historical processes. Studying the past, he wrote, is a guide to avoid fatal errors and to deal with adversity. And knowledge of history and historical processes sensitize people to the currents of change and develops in them the spirit of perseverance and patience.[98] He sets out certain historical laws, drawing on the insights of British and Muslim historians, including Ibn Khaldun (733–808/1332–1406), the great Arab historian.[99] But he fails to live up to the standards that he set for his readers. He criticizes the tendency in the West to demonize Muslim dynasties,[100] but he is himself too enamoured with the West to be objective, detached, and reflective.[101] 'Even dark aspects of their [Western] civilization appear pleasant', he wrote in an article.[102] For this bizarre expression of unrestrained loyalty, Andrews, the biographer, had this to say:

> Zaka Ullah was, to the very depth of his being, a hero-worshipper, whose spiritual nature always depended on having some personality to serve with devotion. He could hardly exist without an atmosphere of loyalty to some higher person about him than a fish can exist without water, or a man can breathe without air.

98 Zaka Ullah, *Muqaddima*, p. 64, and *Makaramu'l-akhlaq*, pp. 532–5.

99 It is the introduction to his *Kitab al-Ibar*, Book of Examples and the Collection of Origins of the History of the Arabs and Berbers.

100 *Tarikh-e Hindustan*, vol. 1, p. 14.

101 For a brief but critical appreciation of his history writing, Saiyid 'Abd Ullah, *Sir Saiyid aur unke namwar rufaqa ki nasar ka fikri aur fani ja'iza*, Delhi, 1960, pp. 224–5.

102 Quoted in M.A. Syed, *Muslim Historiography in India*, p. 63.

The next two volumes, illustrated by extracts from Persian and British sources, are chronologically arranged, covering the Khaljis (*c.* 1290–1320), the Tughlaqs (*c.* 1320–1412), the Saiyids (*c.* 1414–51), the Lodis (*c.* 1414–1526), and the reign of Babur and Humayun. Subsequent volumes turn to regional kingdoms, whereas *Iqbal nama-e Akbari* covers Akbar's reign (*c.* 1556–1605). This book of 1056 pages does not add much to earlier conclusions about Akbar.

The sixth volume is devoted to Jahangir. It is followed by yet another tome on Shah Jahan. The last three deal with Aurangzeb and his successors. Herein, Zaka Ullah does not trace or examine the loss of Mughal power, or analyse its course; instead, his enthusiasm for Aurangzeb (*c.* 1658–1707), whom he admired for his piety and religious devotion—a mirror image of himself—is unabashedly uncritical. He attributes the Mughal decline not to Aurangzeb's religious intolerance or his prolonged and protracted Deccan campaigns, but on his weak and inept successors.

In the first edition of volume one he made certain sharp remarks about his dealing with Bahadur Shah, but he afterwards expressed regret. He used to say that he could not meet any member of the erstwhile Mughal household without feeling a pang of remorse for what he had written. His justification, though, was that his views were those of a historian; and history writing did not allow any favour to be shown even to the high and mighty.[103]

What Zaka Ullah is best at is retelling in detail and in quasi-fictional style, with heightened emotion and effective use of the novelist's art, the story of the futile revolt in 1857. The saga of 1857, as indeed aspects of British rule, is brought alive in a set of publications brought out from 1879 onward. He is critical of Aurangzeb's successors, but fulsome in praising the East India Company. Extolling its achievements, he concludes with an uncritical note: 'In short, the East India Company established the glory and majesty (*shaukat*) of Europe in the east, replacing a barbaric (*wahshiana*) government with a sophisticated (*sha'ista*) and civilised (*muhazzab*) one.'[104]

The *Tarikh-e Hindustan* and his multivolume *History of the Rise of the British Empire* make, in part, fascinating and instructive

103 Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. 19.

104 *Tarikh-e Hindustan 'uruj-e saltanat-e Inglish: Lord Auckland ke 'ahad saltanat se Lord Dalhousie ke 'ahad tak*, Delhi, 1879, vol. 2, no. 3, p. 215.

reading, even though in his preoccupation with details Zaka Ullah has little time for reflection and analysis. This is especially so when he copiously quotes from Henry Elliot and J. Dowson's *History of India as told by its Own Historians*, and the other British historians of India. Judicious selection of facts and compression would have enhanced the narrative's quality, but the very scale of the effort makes for somewhat heavy going. And the account itself makes a less exciting story than might have been expected.

Finally, contrary to Andrews' contention that studying India's ancient past was 'one of the delights of his life, both as a scholar and a patriot', Zaka Ullah reveals a singular lack of sympathy, as does Shibli, for the pre-medieval period.[105] Despite the compliment paid to his skills as a historian by the French Orientalist Garcin de Tassy (*c.* 1794–1878), the *Tarikh* is vastly inferior to the Indo-Persian chroniclers.[106] The voluminous material is 'a paraphrase of the chronicles and history is seemingly used to mean a collection of the different witnesses and facts, and not as a correlation, interpretation, or judgment of those facts. As in the Persian chroniclers, it is full of minute, vivid description of battles and festivities, with a preponderant interest in war and the court, and the significance is missed up with the unimportant. Criticism or analysis of causes is hardly attempted.'[107]

Urdu historiography developed in the nineteenth century, but only slightly. Saiyid Ahmad showed the path when he prepared an edition of Ziau'd-Din Barani's *Tarikh-e Firuz Shahi* (1862) and published the first lithographed text of Abu'l Fazl's *'Ain-e Akbari* from Lucknow (1855). But Muslim historians writing in Urdu remained virtually tied to medieval Indian chroniclers, and uncritically adopted their methods and styles of representation. Though aware of Western methodology, they failed to break the mould. More often than not, they turned apologetic in response

105 See, for example, Shibli Numani, *Maqalat-e Shibli*, Azamgarh, 1937, p. 194, Z.H. Faruqi, 'Sir Saiyyid and Maulana Shibli', Mohibbul Hasan (ed.), *Historians of Medieval India*, Meerut, 1968, p. 240, and for an analysis of Shibli's historical works, Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857–1964*, London, 1967, pp. 77–85.

106 Zaka Ullah translated his collection of five lectures as *Risala-e tazkirat*. Ed. Tanwir Ahmad 'Alvi, Delhi, n.d.

107 A.B.M. Habibullah, 'Historical Writing in Urdu: A Survey of Tendencies', C.H. Philips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London, 1961, p. 489.

to the denunciation of Islam in certain circles, and, in the process, invented their 'glorious' phase of Islamic history with its heroes. That Shibli did while chronicling the life of Umar ibn al-Khattab (*c.* 634–44), second orthodox Khalifa, al-Mamun (*c.* 786–833), Khalifa of Baghdad (*c.* 813–33), Abu Hanifa (*c.* 699–767), a Muslim jurist and founder of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, al-Ghazali (*c.* 1058–1111), the Arab philosopher called by some as the 'Father of the Church of Islam', and Jalalu'd-Din Rumi (*c.* 1207–73), the Persian poet and the author of many exquisite *masnavis*, a collection of double-rhymed verses containing ethical and moral precepts.

Backed by the proliferation of the Urdu press, such efforts developed in the Muslim readership a false sense of cultural and religious superiority, a point Saiyid Ahmad alluded to in his evidence before the Education Commission in 1883. Often, they failed to distinguish between reality and words and symbols; more than once they preferred to believe in fictions and fantasies. But the non-Muslims, who were proficient in Urdu and used it as their language of communication, had little patience with religious and cultural orthodoxies and their assertion through religious decrees (fatwa) or public debates (*munazara*). In effect, the pro-Muslim and pro-Islamic bias of the Muslim historians triggered the trend to write parallel 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' histories that were rooted in invented and imaginary traditions of the past. History writing in Urdu was, consequently, reduced to polemics. Respectable 'historians', often swayed by the rhetoric of the publicists and political propagandists, turned publicists. They were much less read by the audience they targeted, i.e. Muslims, who accessed a wide variety of religious texts, i.e. commentaries on the Koran and Hadis literature (compilation of the traditions of the Prophet). Non-Muslim readers, too, shunned such writings. Besides their content that often hurt their cultural and sensibilities, they were increasingly swayed by the polemics of the Arya Samaj, especially in Punjab and in parts of the North-Western Provinces. Increasingly, the appeal of Muslim historians diminished.

Zaka Ullah was no exception. He was conscious of his Indian Muslim identity, as well his professional obligation as a historian. But, like Shibli and Amir 'Ali (*c.* 1849–1928), he too failed to intellectualize this duality creatively. Often, his Muslim identity

stood in the way of an objective historical enquiry. As a result, his writings did not set a secular trend in Urdu historiography or make the succeeding generation of historians rethink their methodology and approach.

VII

The Coronation Durbar was held on 12 December 1911, in Delhi, the newly chosen imperial capital. The State entry into Delhi led by King George V and Queen Mary went through the Red Fort and onto the big *maidan* between the Fort and the Jama Masjid. An eyewitness described the pomp and pageantry:

> At the time I had an easy feeling that the realities that lie behind politics are pretty thin, & looking back that must, I think, explain why as a whole the people, the real India, surged past the old Fort walls upon which the King & Queen sat alone panoplied in all the cumbrous additaments of their calling. I could not see them, but I did see perhaps 100,000 people washing up to the walls in great waves of many-coloured humanity and emotion breaking from them like foam in the music of uplifted hands and voices. That was a superb and & most moving spectacle.[108]

Andrews witnessed the Durbar. Nazir Ahmad would have heard the shout of 'God Save the King-Emperor', echoed in the lanes and bylanes of the Old City.[109] But there was no Zaka Ullah to witness the curtain being drawn on another phase in Delhi's history. He had died on 7 November 1910, and buried at the shrine of Shah 'Abdu's-Salam Faridi, a Sufi of the Chishti order. In Kucha Balaqi Begum all was quiet that evening, but for the mourners reciting 'We belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return,' and ending with the Koranic prayer 'We come into the world with clenched fists but leave it with open, empty hands and nothing lasts. May the souls of the dead rest in peace.' Just then, the muezzin's call of Allah-o-Akbar, Allah-o-Akbar came from the nearby Jama Masjid, described by the visiting English writer, E.M. Forster (*c.* 1879–1970), as 'a most glorious building—the courtyard raised

108 Malcolm Darling to E.M. Forster, 4 February 1912, in Mary Logo and P.N. Furbank (eds), *Selected Letters of E.M. Forster*, London, 1983, vol. 1, p. 129.

109 He died on 3 May 1912.

on huge basement, colonnaded with sandstone galleries, and paved with marble.'[110]

'The divine stream of eternal life', Zaka Ullah would have quoted from his friend's book *Ab-e hayat* (Ghulam Husain 'Azad' died the same year), 'is flowing yet, on the banks of which, from age to age, all five gatherings are assembled. The 'Water of Life' is making the rounds. The water of the stream captures a picture of the passing of time. And the waves go on bidding farewell to this external life.'[111]

110 Forster to Maura Mary Forster, 31 October 1912, *Selected Letters of E.M. Forster*, p. 146. Forster reached Delhi in mid-October 1912 and stayed with M.A. Ansari [*c.* 1880–1936] at Mori Gate.

111 Azad, *Ab-e hayat*, op. cit., p. 429.

10

Deputy Nazir Ahmad and the Delhi College

Christina Oesterheld

In any publication on the Delhi College, Nazir Ahmad (1830–1912) figures prominently when its famous graduates are mentioned. C.F. Andrews called him 'the greatest of all the learned men of Old Delhi'.[1] Today he is remembered primarily for his bestseller *Miratu'l-'arus* (*The Bride's Mirror*, 1869), an entertaining tale on female education which is more commonly known as the story of Akbari and Asghari. Nazir Ahmad was among the most prolific writers of his time.[2] A born storyteller, Nazir Ahmad wrote seven tales/novels, several collections of tales and textbooks for children. He translated legal documents, historical, philosophical, and

1 C.F. Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, Lahore, Universal Books, 1976.

2 For a detailed and insightful discussion of Nazir Ahmad's life and works, see Iftikhar Ahmad Siddiqi, *Maulawi Nazir Ahmad Dihlawi, ahwal-o-asar* (Lahore, Majlis-e Taraqqi-e Adab, 1971), which to this date is the most profound monograph available on Nazir Ahmad. The author has analysed not only Nazir Ahmad's famous 'novels', but also his often ignored translations, theological writings, and speeches. A detailed study in English of his books for girls and of his role as a social reformer is contained in Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars. Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998. Muhammad Sadiq discusses his literary works in some detail in his *History of Urdu Literature*, 2nd edn, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 408–16.

scientific texts from English into Urdu. In the later phase of his life he prepared an annotated translation of and a commentary on the Koran as well as guidebooks for Indian Muslims.

While he had become famous as a writer with his very first book, his first speech at the Town Hall in Delhi in 1888 launched him on a second career as a popular orator. Between 1888 and 1905 he delivered numerous speeches at annual meetings of the Muslim Educational Conference, the Anjuman-e Himayat-e Islam (Association for the Support of Islam, Lahore) and the Madrasa Tibbiya (Medical College, Delhi). Despite these remarkable achievements, he became a highly controversial figure toward the end of his life, having alienated narrow-minded maulawis and some fellow activists at Aligarh alike. Although the credit for his achievements as well as his failures in the first place goes to his multifaceted personality, his intellect, and his strong willpower, there can be no doubt that the years spent at the Delhi College left a lasting impact on his perceptible mind and did a great deal to shape his future. Nazir Ahmad acknowledged the contribution of the college to the making of his personality in his *Darbari Lecture*:

> A wide range of knowledge, freedom of thought, toleration, sincere loyalty towards the government, innovative spirit, a high intellect—these are the things which are the good results of education and which truly form the precondition for life, and all this I learned and acquired at the college. Had I not studied at the college.... I would have turned into a Maulawi, narrow-minded, full of prejudice, self-centred, devoid of self-criticism, anxious to find fault with others, self-righteous, an ill-advised friend of the Muslims, deaf and blind to the requirements of the age.... Anyway, whatever worldly and religious benefits I gained, I owe them all to Delhi College.[3]

Let us look first at Nazir Ahmad's sojourn at the Delhi College to learn about the subjects he took, the friends he made, the skills and experiences and the knowledge he acquired there. Later we will try to trace the long-term effects of the education Nazir Ahmad received at Delhi College—on him as a person, as a thinker and writer, as an educator and educationist, as an activist of the Aligarh movement, and as a religious reformer.

3 Fortieth lecture, delivered at Delhi in 1903. In Maulawi Bashiru'd-Din Ahmad ed., *Lekcaron ka Majmu'a, Jild Duwwum*, Agra, Mufid-e 'Am Stimar Press, 1918, p. 419. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations are mine.

Nazir Ahmad's Studies at Delhi College

Nazir Ahmad was born in 1830 in the small town Rehar in what is now northern Uttar Pradesh.[4] His family was poor, but respected for its learning and its Sufi background. He received his primary education in Persian and Arabic from his father. His next teacher for about three years was Maulawi Nasr Ullah Khan Khurjwi, a distinguished scholar in traditional Islamic learning who had risen to the rank of deputy collector in Bijnore. In his *Darbari Lecture*, Nazir Ahmad is full of praise for his teacher, an exemplary figure who combined all virtues of a religious scholar and a pious Muslim (*mumin*) with success and standing in the world:

> High position and dignity, power and authority, knowledge and learning, generosity/liberality (*ser chashmi*), gentleness (*hilm*) and humility (*tawazu'*), shari'at and tariqat (religious law and mysticism?)—so many virtues I never found united in one single person, and no contemporary could equal him in perfection.[5]

Nazir Ahmad was so impressed by the Maulawi that he decided to strive for similar achievements in his own life. Not only the wisdom and learning, the prosperity and the official standing of the Maulawi, but also his simple lifestyle, his lack of arrogance and pride provided Nazir Ahmad with a role model he could emulate. And in one more respect Maulawi Nasr Ullah Khan must have served as an example for him: as a truly dedicated, benevolent teacher who despite his official obligations found time to write textbooks for his pupils.

The next stage in his education looks less pleasant and fruitful, at least in Nazir Ahmad's own words. Around 1842–3 he and his elder brother were taken to Delhi by their father, where they stayed with Maulawi 'Abdu'l-Khaliq at the Aurangabadi Mosque in Panjabi Katra. He claims to have been left to fend for himself (by begging for alms) and to have received little education during the years at the mosque. However, it is quite possible that he later presented this stage of his life in too gloomy colours, perhaps for the sake of dramatic effect. This brings us to the problem of his self-portrayal. Nazir Ahmad has left a wealth of autobiographical

4 For a short biography of Nazir Ahmad in English, see Ralph Russell, *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature: A Select History*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 112–20.

5 *Darbari Lecture*, pp. 415–16.

material to posterity, scattered in his letters, speeches, prefaces, etc. Although this is a welcome feast for any researcher, much of the information he provides has to be taken with a pinch of salt. Sometimes his love of storytelling, and perhaps also the intention to present a larger-than-life image of himself, got the better of him. His autobiographical lecture (the *Darbari Lecture* mentioned above) is full of highly dramatic episodes and anecdotes. Some of these were further elaborated by his first biographers Maulawi Iftikhar 'Alam Marharwi/Bilgrami[6] and Mirza Farhat Ullah Beg (1883–1947).[7] They were often taken by their face value by later authors. The story of Nazir Ahmad's admission to Delhi College is a good example. Muhammad Sadiq summarizes the version handed down by Maulawi Iftikhar 'Alam as follows:

> He had been attracted, we are told, to the Delhi College to watch the annual prize distribution; and as the crowd poured out of the building he fell down, receiving a few bruises. This accident proved the making of his life. So well did this mite of a boy, rescued from the crush, impress the kindly Principal with his ready wit, that he decided to admit him to the College with a stipend.[8]

Different years are also given for Nazir Ahmad's entrance into Delhi College, ranging between 1845 and 1847. According to Iftikhar Ahmad Siddiqi, factual evidence, however, shows that Nazir Ahmad and his elder brother entered the college in 1846. At that time, Ahmad was 15 or 16 years old, not such a small boy as the story would make us believe. Delhi College had become a well-established and famous institution, and its graduates acquired good positions from Punjab to Bengal. Moreover, it granted stipends, which must have added to its attraction for Nazir Ahmad. Siddiqi concludes:

> Nazir Ahmad right from his childhood had been a student with self-respect and high ambition. He was fed up with the beggar's life at Punjabi Katra and

6 *Hayatu'n-Nazir*, Delhi, 1912. There is some confusion about the last part of the author's name which denotes his place of origin. Siddiqi gives 'Marharwi', whereas Sadiqur Rahman Kidwai, Muhammad Sadiq, Gail Minault, David Lelyveld and others have 'Bilgrami'. Iftikhar Ahmad Siddiqi's version is corroborated by a footnote in Bashiru'd-Din Ahmad's preface to the first edition of the complete collection of Nazir Ahmad's lectures (see above). 'Bilgrami' seems to have been the version given in the book itself.

7 *Daktar Nazir Ahmad ki kahani, kuch meri aur kuch un ki zabani*, 1927.

8 Sadiq, *History of Urdu Literature*, p. 408. In the reference to a quotation from *Hayatu'n-Nazir*, Sadiq gives the author's name as 'Iftikhar 'Alam Bilgrami' (note 1 to chapter XVII, p. 642).

anxious to embark on a path to (professional) advancement. In view of these facts it is likely that when living in Delhi for three years had opened his eyes and had provided him information about the college, both brothers must have worked out a way to get admitted.[9]

They were admitted on grant. Nazir Ahmad enrolled in the Arabic class. The stipends they received—initially Rs 4 which gradually increased to Rs 12 per month—proved to be the family's main source of sustenance for the years to come because their father died soon after. Nazir Ahmad took two additional courses to speed up his studies and also studied at night. His teacher, Maulana Mamluk 'Ali Nanautawi, was ready to give his aspiring students time over and above regular classes. Maulawi Iftikhar 'Alam reports that the professor offered to teach Nazir Ahmad while walking from his home to the college because he could not spare any other time.[10]

The Arabic syllabus at Delhi College differed from the conventional *Nizami* syllabus (*Dars-e Nizami*) in so far as it was centred not around theological texts, but on classical Arabic belles-lettres. Nazir Ahmad profited from Aloys Sprenger's respective changes in the syllabus/curriculum and from his initiative to procure from Europe some Arabic texts which were not available in India and edit them for Delhi College students. Nazir Ahmad's profound knowledge of Arabic formed the basis for his later engagement with the Koran. In his autobiographical lecture he somewhat belittles the practical value of his erudition in Arabic literature:

Although Arabic literature was not of much use to me later in life, but one thing it certainly did: for the rest of my life it provided me with a pastime that pleased my heart.[11]

It no doubt did more than this—it established his standing as one of the best scholars of Arabic of his time, it helped him a lot in his translations, and it attracted scores of pupils to him when he had settled in Delhi after his retirement from Haidarabad. The rather unorthodox Arabic curriculum of Delhi College, however, served as a disadvantage when he engaged in theological debate and writing after 1893. To be on the safe side, he took advice from

9 Siddiqi, *Nazir Ahmad*, p. 48.
10 Quoted in Siddiqi, *Nazir Ahmad*, p. 51.
11 *Darbari Lecture*, p. 423.

several scholars of Muslim theology. Even then, his unorthodox reasoning and his numerous attacks on the narrow-mindedness of the Maulawis was bound to attract fierce criticism from the latter. We will return to this point later.

Taking Arabic literature as his major subject, Nazir Ahmad dropped science as a subject. Nevertheless, his early lessons in science and mathematics, his close friendship with Master Ram Chandra, and his translations of scientific texts were sufficient to equip him with a basic, but lasting knowledge of those fields. Many of his books, letters, and lectures bear testimony to the fact that he not only remembered many facts and details about scientific explorations and technical developments, but also enjoyed referring to them—as a proof of his learning and, perhaps even more so, as powerful tools in his argumentation. Why he did not take up science as his major subject, but was not able to escape it altogether, is described in the *Darbari Lecture*:

> When science began to undermine my religious beliefs, I could no longer bring it upon me to engage in science. But what use was my disinclination? The sounds and noises of science reverberated from every nook and corner of the college, rather a time came when they started to roar like drums, that is when the science professor Master Ram Chandra... decided to get baptised.[12]

The same idea is repeated later:

> Frankly speaking, although I had only tasted a little of the poison of science, it had deeply shaken my faith.[13]

He described how scientific discoveries may affect a person's religious beliefs, quoting the contradiction between the scientific model of the solar system and the description of the Earth as a flat disc in the Koran and concluding:

> This is only a small example. How many scientific concepts contradict common religious beliefs of ordinary Muslims! The natural outcome is that a person who studies science, not necessarily in English but in any given language, in his belief system usually cannot remain a common/ordinary Muslim like the others. Yes, he may continue to mix with ordinary Muslims, but even then he will be a hypocrite—outwardly Muslim, but inside an infidel (*kafir*). And not only that a student of science cannot remain a conventional Muslim. I say, and I say it aloud and without fearing to be refuted, that he

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., p. 424.

cannot remain within the fold of any of the known religions, neither a Hindu, nor a Christian, nor Jew, nor anything else, because how many religions there are, all without fail are opposed to science.[14]

There is some ambiguity in this statement. Does scientific knowledge/education prevent a Muslim from remaining a Muslim at all or only from remaining a conventional Muslim? Although at one point Nazir Ahmad argues that such a person will be a kafir, personally he tried his best to restore his faith in Islam without letting go of whatever science education he had. One thing is certain: in many regards he was different from conventional Muslims of his time. As we will see later, he attempted to resolve the constant battle between reason and faith in his own belief system by delineating their respective limits and by concentrating on the Koran as his main source of inspiration. This he mentions at another place while discussing the impact of Master Ram Chandra's conversion on him:

I was very close to the Master Sahib and often also went to his house. The Master would have led me astray...but for my love of Arabic literature. I was infatuated with the style of the Koran. This antidote saved me from the poison, so much so that I left the college with my faith in place, but what a faith—shaken, doubtful, weak, shallow. I started to read books on (scholastic) theology (*'ilm-e kalam*), both pro and contra (?). The Master wanted to make me a Christian, and the scholastics an atheist.[15]

Nazir Ahmad mentions how agitated the professors and students of the Arabic courses were by Master Ram Chandra's conversion and how they staged protests almost every day, but their voices were neutralized by their ignorance:

I saw that the Maulawis didn't remain silent. They went on talking, but their talking was equal to being speechless because these people didn't know the first thing about Christianity.[16]

In another lecture, Nazir Ahmad describes how after his conversion Master Ram Chandra started to involve everybody, teachers and students alike, into religious disputations. Nazir Ahmad at

14 Ibid., pp. 422–3.

15 Seventh Lecture, delivered at Lahore in February 1890. In *Lekcaron ka Majmu'a, Jild Awwal*, p. 200.

16 Ibid.

that time studied in the highest course of Arabic but even then he had to experience defeat: 'The Master (Ram Chandra) silenced us all, one by one.'[17]

The uproar around Master Ram Chandra's conversion in 1852 is dealt with in detail in the respective chapter. Nazir Ahmad was among his favoured pupils and later his closest friends. He and Zaka Ullah stood by him throughout those tumultuous events. There are several hints that Nazir Ahmad, too, at a time was inclined to take baptism and that only strong pressure and intimidation prevented him from doing so. Kidwai writes:

> ...Ram Chandra mentions a student from the First Class Arabic course who was taunted and teased, and eventually people started to call him an infidel (*kafir*), but he challenged everybody by saying that anybody calling him a *kafir* should prove that Islam was right. For this crime he had to pay a heavy price, and the *Sadr Amin* of Delhi coerced him by threats to sign a statement in which he declared his rejection of Christianity and his acceptance of Islam. Ram Chandra reported that in secret, however, he confessed to me that only pressure and coercion prevented him from accepting Christianity. To my mind, this statement alludes to Nazir Ahmad.[18]

There is no explicit evidence for the latter in Nazir Ahmad's own writing. To the contrary, a passage in his introductory note to C.F. Andrews' biography of Zaka Ullah, written in 1912, rather suggests that Zaka Ullah was the person alluded to:

> It is well known among Musalmans that Professor Ram Chandra, after much hesitation and deep searching of heart, left Hinduism and accepted the Christian faith. Since Zaka Ullah was recognized by all to be his favourite pupil and was constantly seen with him, after he became a Christian, people in Delhi began to have some doubt about Zaka Ullah's own religious position, and wondered whether he too had become influenced by his teacher.[19]

Nazir Ahmad then goes on to refute any such suspicions and voices his strong conviction that Zaka Ullah remained 'a strict Unitarian Musalman'.[20] But in his books and lectures he no doubt

17 Ibid.

18 Sadiqur Rahman Kidwai, *Master Ram Chandra*, Delhi, Department of Urdu, University of Delhi, 1961, pp. 49–50.

19 Nazir Ahmad, 'Introductory Memoir' in Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, p. ix.

20 Ibid., p. x.

repeatedly mentioned the doubts and tribulations which had befallen him during his studies at Delhi College. Thus he writes:

> As far as faith is concerned, the time of my studies at the college was a period of great wavering. This state of mine kept me away from science for the rest of my life.[21]

Kidwai quotes a passage from Iftikhar 'Alam Bilgrami's *Hayatu'n-Nazir* presented there as Nazir Ahmad's autobiographical confession. The whole paragraph, however, is part of a character's speech in his book *Ruya-e Sadiqa* ('Sadiqa's Dream'/'A Truthful Dream', 1893). Although it may contain a strong autobiographical element, and every detail of the character's education suggests that it does, it nevertheless has to be seen as the statement of a fictional character and thus distinguished from a self-confession. The statement runs as follows:

> And then, when I started to lean towards Christianity, things went so far that I exchanged 'Muhammad' for 'Jesus ' in my prayers. But my heart hesitated to accept Jesus as God or the son of God. Thus, reluctantly I again switched from Jesus to Muhammad. My mouth confessed, but my heart denied. In short, at times I was a Christian, at times a Muslim, and sometimes nothing at all.[22]

Science education and Christianity, however, were not the only challenges to Nazir Ahmad's faith. Religious disputations (*munazaras*) and public sermons were at their height in Delhi at the time of his studies. The battle line often was drawn not between Muslim and Christian preachers but between adherents of different reformist Muslim schools of thought, especially between the followers of Shah Wali Ullah and his descendants on the one hand and their adversaries on the other.

This early experience of infighting among Muslims—between Sunnis and Shias and between different subsects, etc.—made him into a fierce advocate of Muslim unity in all his works. On the effect of munazaras on his mind he writes, that they only highlight the self-righteousness of the adversaries; they may succeed in silencing the opponent, but:

> a third person who is in the search of truth gets suspicious of them both because neither of them is without deficiencies.[23]

21 Nazir Ahmad, *Darbari Lecture*, p. 423.
22 Nazir Ahmad, *Ruya-e Sadiqa*, Lucknow, n.d., p. 215.
23 Ibid., pp. 200–1.

Moreover, he doubted that such disputations really did any service to the respective religious creed:

> Point out one religion to me which was made extinct by debates and disputations. Even if you search your whole life long, you won't find any.... when I hear about somebody's conversion it doesn't affect my heart more than hearing, say, that a person took several pitchers of water from the Rawi and poured them into the Chenab. Neither did this dry up the Rawi, nor did it cause any noticeable rise in the Chenab.[24]

He is certainly right as far as the effect of religious disputations is concerned, but the indifference about conversions he professes here seems slightly forced. True, in the same lecture he also stresses that differences between peoples are created by Allah and therefore need not be removed, but he is very much aware of the danger created by contact with other faiths:

> The property of surrender we find in man and which is essential especially for faith is, if not extinguished, so no doubt weakened. The heart begins to demand evidence for everything.[25]

Nazir Ahmad viewed religious debates among Muslims as detrimental to their unity and continued to condemn them until the end of his life. He was full of contempt for narrow-minded, fanatic proponents of any particular school/sect of Islam railing against all others. The passage above, however, clearly shows that the main danger to his own religious convictions arose from inter-religious disputations like those with Master Ram Chandra which unsettled the core of his faith. Thus, the time he spent at Delhi College proved to be a period of challenge to his faith from different angles: from science education, interaction with proponents of Christianity, and the repulsive experience of Delhi's Muslim theologians. And yet, Nazir Ahmad in retrospect acknowledged these challenges as a blessing:

> By upbringing, I was destined to become a *taqlidi* (imitative, following the given path) Muslim, but by the grace of God I didn't. By chance I was confronted with an incident which for a long time to come kept me searching for religious truth, until finally the rightfulness of Islam was settled irrevocably in my mind like a line engraved on stone.[26]

24 Ibid., p. 214.
25 Ibid., p. 210.
26 Ibid., p. 199.

The incident he refers, of course, to Ram Chandra's conversion. As we see, Nazir Ahmad finally judged this experience as decisive for the development of his personal faith and his view of Islam.

According to one statement, Nazir Ahmad would have liked to learn English at Delhi College, but his father had strongly prohibited him from doing so:

> I am the son of such a father that although the principal of Delhi College wanted me to learn English, my father who was a poor man but very pious...said bluntly that he would rather have me die, have me begging in the streets, but could not bear me to learn English.[27]

At another place, however, he states that earlier he himself was prejudiced against the English language:

> During my student days society's prejudices didn't allow me to learn English, and I myself was also a bit suspicious of it.[28]

Anyway, he could not directly participate in the translations from English into Urdu which were produced at Delhi College under the auspices of the Vernacular Translation Society which had been founded in 1843. He, however, took part in the revision of Urdu translations which is proved by the remuneration he received for his services. He also revised Master Ram Chandra's articles and thus had a first-hand chance to get information about a wide range of subjects and to be acquainted with his teacher's pioneering ideas. In fact, many of the views expressed in those articles we later come across in Nazir Ahmad's didactic tales for female education. Though Ram Chandra did not write books for female education, he was perhaps the first Urdu writer to voice the need for women's education and to stress women's rights.[29] Moreover, Nazir Ahmad translated from Arabic into Urdu which was a good exercise for the translation projects he undertook later in life. All these activities helped him to polish his Urdu style. Though Nazir Ahmad developed into a much greater stylist and was far more eloquent than his teacher, Master Ram Chandra's functional, plain language must have left an impact on his style

27 Fifteenth Lecture, delivered at Lahore in 1893. In *Lekcaron ka Majmu'a, Jild Awwal*, pp. 380–1.

28 *Darbari Lecture*, p. 427.

29 Cp. Kidwai, *Master Ram Chandra*, p. 36.

which becomes obvious in his Urdu translations of legal and scientific texts.

What Nazir Ahmad saw of the English classes at Delhi College was instrumental in his desire to learn English. He was quick to realize that the knowledge of English provided direct access not only to modern learning but to better career opportunities as well. Both motivations went hand in hand with him throughout the first part of his life. Thus, he took the first available opportunity to learn English privately, and later on he saw to it that his son Bashir got a sound grounding in English after he himself had taught him Urdu and Arabic. In a letter to Bashir he went so far as to write:

> I don't have words to express how important speaking English is. One may say that the actual purpose of sending you to college is only this.[30]

He further advises his son to use every moment of his spare time to practise English. One cannot help but feel that Nazir Ahmad wanted his son to make up for everything which he had missed in his college days so that Bashir would feel more secure and self-assured about his English than Nazir Ahmad ever could.

There can be no doubt that even more than the actual courses he took it was the overall atmosphere at Delhi College and the numerous extracurricular activities he engaged in together with teachers and fellow-students which shaped Nazir Ahmad's mind and personality.

Life After the College

After leaving the college in 1853 Nazir Ahmad spent two years teaching at an elementary school in Punjab. He later described this period as a bore and a waste of his time, talent, and knowledge.[31] To get out of this post he sent numerous requests to the Education Department. When as a result he had to decide between a teaching job and a posting as deputy inspector of schools in Kanpur, for a career-oriented person like him the choice was clear: despite lesser pay he opted for the second because that path could lead him to the Civil Service. But even at the new posting he was unhappy, and

30 Nazir Ahmad, *Mau'iza-e Hasna*, Lahore, Majlis-e Taraqqi-e Adab, 1963, p. 5.
31 *Darbari Lecture*, p. 424.

in 1857 he quit after a British superior reprimanded him for chewing betel leaf.[32] He returned to Delhi where he remained all throughout the Rising of 1857–58. In his *Darbari Lecture* he describes his impression of that period in one sentence:

> What of postings and studies—it was difficult to stay alive. But then it was destined for us to enjoy the blessings of British rule.[33]

Together with his in-laws he saved an injured British woman whom this family of Maulawis hid and nursed. It was a dangerous mission, with the English woman hidden in the same mosque where the insurgents camped. In Nazir Ahmad's words:

> This act of benevolence, leave alone that it was done at such a time of peril, 'If infidelity emanates from the Ka'aba, what will remain of Muslim faith 'it was perpetrated by a family of Maulawis, and this, too, in such secrecy that on one side the mosque was full of insurgents, and on the other side, right next to them, 'there should be a tavern in the shadow of the mosque' a lady stayed for several month, but they didn't get the least inkling of it.[34]

After her recovery they escorted her to the British camp well before the British recaptured Delhi. Nazir Ahmad later stresses that his part in the mission was due to 'the influence of the education and the company at Delhi College'.[35] After the British victory he left Delhi together with his family, but later he was reinstated as deputy inspector of schools in Allahabad. Here he eventually started to learn English, and here he was introduced to Sir William Muir who got him on his first commission to translate legal texts from English into Urdu. For his substantial part in the successful translation of the Indian Penal Code he was recommended for the post of deputy collector. In 1863 he got his first posting as deputy collector and served in this position at different places until 1877. From 1877 until 1884 Nazir Ahmad worked in the princely state of Haidarabad where he was offered a very good salary and pension. In 1884 political intrigues and an overall hostile climate made him resign from service. He returned to Delhi and spent the

32 This episode is reported in *Hayatu'n-Nazir* and Siddiqi is convinced that in the light of Nazir Ahmad's personality and his sense of pride this reaction is quite plausible. Cf. *Nazir Ahmad*, p. 80.

33 *Darbari Lecture*, p. 425.

34 Ibid., pp. 425–6. Nazir Ahmad does not give any sources for verse quotations.

35 Ibid., p. 426.

following years reading, writing, teaching Arabic, and addressing public gatherings. Between 1888 and 1905 he made about 44 speeches which were published in two volumes after his death. They are a valuable source for the study of his oratory, his political, religious, and social concepts, as well as the historical context. His career as a writer ended in 1909 when he was accused of objectionable language and especially of irreverence toward the Prophet's wives whom he treated as ordinary human beings in his book *Ummahatu'l-umma* ('Mothers of the Muslims'). He retreated from public life, but continued to read and give private lessons in Arabic. Three tales and a number of religious books are the outcome of those years. Nazir Ahmad died in Delhi in 1912.

Traces of the College

Since Nazir Ahmad is best known as an educator and educationist, let us first look at his views on education and at his textbooks. He had the experience of different styles and systems of pedagogy, both negative and positive. He valued the education he was given by his own father and later by Maulawi Nasr Ullah Khan Khurjwi very highly, and he always stressed the great value of memorizing which was a central part of the traditional mode of instruction. He was, however, very critical of memorizing without understanding, and in his letters to his son he time and again extolled him to scrutinize every text he studied and to probe into its deeper meaning. In this context he repeatedly reminded Bashir of the model of the (ideal) teacher-pupil-relationship which provided the pupil the opportunity to develop his knowledge and understanding by questioning. When Bashir studied at Delhi College in 1876–7, Nazir Ahmad suggested several learned *maulawis* (a scholar of Islamic law, a learned man) whom he was to consult in addition to the classes at the college because he was convinced that the English mode of instruction provided only superficial knowledge which would not last.

On the other hand, Nazir Ahmad thoroughly condemned the teaching materials and textbooks which were in use until the second half of the nineteenth century. In several lectures he stressed the need for new books which should take into consideration the abilities and interests of the students. His impression was that

Oriental textbooks were designed to display the author's learning, with complete disregard for the students' needs. Most works were too voluminous and difficult—individual capacities were not taken into account.[36] Moreover, he found many of the texts which were part of the traditional curriculum, especially of Persian, morally objectionable. We find the fiercest attack on such books in his *Taubatu'n-Nasuh* (*The Repentance of Nasuh*, 1874). Along with a sweeping condemnation of all classical literature, and especially Persian and Urdu poetry, the hero of the novel, Nasuh, reminds his wife that he had to cut at least one fourth of Sa'adi's *Gulistan* when he read out the book to her, because:

> the great difficulty was that I couldn't use foul and obscene language in front of you. And this is the case with a book which is supposed to deal with morals and manners...and whose author is counted among the friends of God (*auliya*)![37]

Here we have to keep in mind that the *Gulistan* constituted one of the core texts for Muslim education. Even without sharing Nazir Ahmad's rather prudish views one has to admit that the *Gulistan* indeed was not very suitable as a textbook for Muslim children in the nineteenth century because it was completely detached from their own life. The same applied to other teaching materials. Driven by this conviction, Nazir Ahmad wrote a number of textbooks for his own children and for the use in government schools.[38] Best known are his books for girls' education. Most of his other textbooks, however, are almost forgotten though they, too, were pioneering attempts in their respective fields. His books on logic (*Mabadiu'l-Hikmat*, *c.* 1871) and Arabic morphology (*Mayaghnik filsarf*, *c.* 1870–1) demonstrate a completely new methodology and style. The language is plain and lucid, close to the colloquial without getting flippant. The author tries to rouse children's interest by relating to their everyday experiences and presents the material as simply as possible. The second book also contains a number of instructions for teachers. One of his earliest textbooks,

36 Ibid., pp. 453–4.

37 Nazir Ahmad, *Taubatu'n-Nasuh*, New Delhi, Maktaba Jamia, 1991, p. 195.

38 For a detailed account of the historical context of this textbook production, see C.M. Naim, 'Prize-Winning *Adab*: A Study of Five Urdu Books Written in Response to the Allahabad Government Gazette Notification', in Barbara Daly Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of* Adab *in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984, pp. 290–314.

Rasmu'l-Khat ('Script'), was published only in 1912, but afterwards became quite popular. All textbooks testify to Nazir Ahmad's keen interest in pedagogy and his remarkable pedagogical talent.

It is difficult, or rather impossible, to judge how far his pedagogy was influenced by his student years at Delhi College. But there can be no doubt that the interaction between teachers and students, the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers, the tremendous output of writings and translations in which students and teachers engaged collectively must have left their marks on him. The broad range of subjects and the special interest in science education and scientific experimentation which he experienced at the college widened his outlook on education tremendously. Despite his professed dislike of science he later time and again stressed the importance of education in the natural sciences and in modern technology as essential for Indians, and especially for Indian Muslims. This constituted one of the core messages of his speeches. Similarly, we find the following passages in his novel *Ibnu'l-Waqt* (*Son of the Moment*, 1888):

> The real cause of the progress in Europe is the spread of modern sciences. Only that education can be of any use today which may create in the people the spirit to think about matters of fact and ponder over natural phenomena.... We need those sciences which would help in developing our industries and crafts, whereas the people are now taught in a way that they come to despise their hereditary and ancestral occupations. Rather, they take to education to save themselves from their shame.[39]

Voiced by the hero of the novel, *Ibnu'l-Waqt*, in a long speech addressed to British officers, they can safely be taken to mirror the author's perspective. Nazir Ahmad was highly critical of the exclusive orientation toward government service which dominated education at Aligarh. You might also have noticed a certain class bias in the words quoted above, based on the fear that members of the lower classes may compete with the traditional service classes for a limited number of government jobs. On the other hand, he was aware of the fact that an appropriate training of artisans, technicians, industrial workers, and entrepreneurs was a prerequisite for a prospering Indian economy. In an address to the

39 Nazir Ahmad, *Son of the Moment*, translated by Mohammed Zakir, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2002, p. 94.

Anjuman-e Himayat-e Islam, delivered at Lahore in 1890, he criticized Muslim reformers for concentrating their efforts exclusively on education for government service, saying:

> Do they not accept those as Muslims who earn their living by other occupations?[40]

The same critique is reiterated in another lecture: 'The present educational system has succeeded in procuring government jobs for a selected few, but the masses are without jobs. This is a very dangerous tendency because unemployed youth will spread unrest in the country which may finally lead to rebellion.'[41] As is often the case in his lectures, toward the end he pronounces a quite contrary opinion, stating that for the time being Aligarh is good enough for Indian Muslims, and it will take ages before they can aspire to fields other than service.[42] This conciliatory note was perhaps chosen so as not to dishearten his addressees—the students at Aligarh.

When the education of his own son was concerned, Nazir Ahmad also opted for an orientation toward government service instead of science, technology, or business. We may concede that this was in line with his own career, and he appears to have been aware of the fact that, despite his numerous attempts, he lacked the instinct for business. In a letter to his son he confessed that he chose to invest his money mostly in promissory notes because the two other available options, investing in trade or agriculture, were too risky for him. (In this context he referred to the Koran, pronouncements by Shah 'Abdu'l-Aziz, Saiyid Ahmad Khan, and to several fatwas by a reformist Shiite theologian to relieve his conscience about the fact that he received interest on his savings.[43]) Trade required a lot of specialized knowledge, experience, and connections, and agriculture was heavily impeded by natural calamities and excessive taxation.[44] Nevertheless he was full of praise for the Punjabi traders with whom he had come into contact while living in Old Delhi's Panjabi Katra. For him these people, though not

40 Nazir Ahmad, 7th Lecture, p. 187.

41 Cp. 16th Lecture, delivered at Aligarh in 1893. In *Lekcaron ka Majmu'a, Jild Awwal*, pp. 424–5.

42 Ibid., p. 434.

43 Nazir Ahmad, *Mau'iza-e Hasna*, pp. 179–80.

44 Ibid., pp. 181–2.

highly educated, exemplified a financially successful, prosperous Muslim community, an example of enterprise, rigorous management of time and resources, and healthy pragmatism. In other words, they demonstrated those bourgeois virtues which in his and other reformers' opinion most of their fellow Muslims lacked.[45]

Central to matters of education is the choice of the medium of instruction. Nazir Ahmad had received his initial education at home in his mother tongue Urdu, and at Delhi College he experienced instruction in all subjects in Urdu. After 1837, Urdu played an important role in administration, jurisdiction, and education on the lower and medium level. Thus it was only natural that he wrote all his books in Urdu. He cultivated a colloquial and vivid language, full of idioms, of all shades of humour, and yet capable of complex ideas. Apart from lengthy Arabic quotations and a tendency to use unwarranted English words in letters and speeches, nineteenth-century's Urdu was at its best in his writings. Nazir Ahmad also strictly upheld the notion that in all translations into Urdu the current standard of the spoken language had to be followed. His service to the Urdu language can thus hardly be overemphasized. But with all this consciousness of language use, Nazir Ahmad did not value Urdu very much. He probably took it for granted, but never expressed any enthusiasm for it. He deemed it to still be in its infancy, lacking in terminology and useful literature. Instead, he gave importance to two other languages: English and Arabic. English granted access to modern knowledge and thereby to a career in the colonial dispensation. The short-term aim was to succeed in one of the modern professions, but in the long run Indians, and particularly Indian Muslims, had to master modern knowledge to be able to compete with the European powers. It is quite pathetic to see how Nazir Ahmad—almost on his knees—begged his son to improve his English. This is the *leitmotif* of the majority of his letters to Bashir. Only when he was satisfied that Bashir had acquired a sound knowledge of English, did he admonish him to concentrate his energies on Arabic. As long as he was doubtful of Bashir's English, Arabic played only second fiddle, though he constantly reminded him also to at least keep up his knowledge of Arabic. Nazir Ahmad was confident that he had provided Bashir with a sound grounding in Arabic before

45 Ibid., pp. 201–2.

he joined the Delhi College. To illustrate the importance of English education, he asked Bashir to look at the books in the Delhi College's library where he would see that all books in Arabic and Persian were written centuries ago—hence there was no modern knowledge in them.[46] In another letter he wrote:

> With the exception of religious matters, the worst English education is better and more useful than the best Arabic education.[47]

English was the language of useful knowledge and of power, but Arabic was the language of spirituality, religious and cultural identity and, at least for Nazir Ahmad, a language dear to the heart. As such, he never tired to praise the beauty of Arabic and to underscore its central importance for Islam. Nazir Ahmad's pronouncements with regard to English and Arabic better than anything else exhibit his dual approach to worldly success and religious identity for future generations of Muslims. English in his view was bound to become the dominant language of the public sphere, and Arabic would remain the backbone of individual spirituality and religious discourse based on the Koran. He never projected them as conflicting or contradicting each other, rather he attempted a combination of both. That English education, however, implied a number of dangers for his belief system, surfaces again and again in his writings.

Contradictions are a part also of Nazir Ahmad's other writings and pronouncements. It seems that throughout his life he was torn between conflicting impulses and ideas. The colonial situation was prone to produce similar effects on all Indians who came into contact with the colonial administration and the new education system, but on a receptive and extraordinarily sharp mind such as Nazir Ahmad's the effect was perhaps even more dramatic. Moreover, the circumstances of his life made him extremely sensitive whenever his self-respect, his dignity, or his moral instincts were concerned. In the following passage we will briefly examine the inner tension in his views with regard to British rule, to English education, and in his religious thinking.

Nazir Ahmad to a great deal attributed his loyalty toward the British to his education at Delhi College. Some of the statements

46 Ibid., p. 192.
47 Ibid., p. 132.

quoted in this paper bear testimony to this fact. Broadly speaking, this impact of the college might have worked in two ways. Firstly through the intimate contact with British and other European scholars and administrators who won his admiration by their erudition, dedication, and personal integrity. At the college he experienced cordial cooperation between Indian and Western scholars as well as an intellectual atmosphere that was open to new challenges. Compared with traditional Indian education, the more egalitarian relation between teachers and students must also have appealed to his strong sense of pride. Thus, by first, hand experience he was able to overcome the prejudices against everything Western which were still widespread in the conservative Muslim circles of Delhi. Secondly, the time at Delhi College probably helped him to realize that there was no alternative to British rule, at least not in the foreseeable future. Thus, like Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan, he was an ardent champion of good relations between Indian Muslims and their British masters. Some of his declarations of loyalty and support to the British government border on toadyism and may look disgusting to contemporary readers. When viewed in the historical context, however, such statements become understandable as more or less desperate attempts to win the goodwill of the powers that be and negotiate the best terms for one's own community. Thus, Ibnu'l-Waqt's following words:

> I hereby declare that I make an offering of my heart to the Government. God willing, I shall spend all my life in my endeavour to work for the betterment, firm establishment and strength of the Government and for making it more popular.[48]

or:

> I consider the English Government to be a God-sent boon and a blessing for India. Thus, my whole endeavour will be such that the subjects of India may take full advantage of it.[49]

These lines come very close to the numerous declarations of loyalty in Nazir Ahmad's speeches, but when we contrast these lines with the severe criticism of the government which precedes them we get a more balanced picture. In his long address to British

48 Nazir Ahmad, *Son of the Moment*, p. 101.
49 Ibid.

officers, Ibnu'l-Waqt names fully justified discontent of the subjects as the main reason for the 'Mutiny' and recounts a long list of grievances. He stresses the economic profit England makes by exploiting India and the ruin of Indian handicrafts by cheap imports as well as of Indian peasants by indiscriminate tax enforcement. Add to this the arrogance of the rulers. Here are two extracts from his speech:

> The English, with rare exceptions, are so rudely behaved with Indians and hold them in such contempt that no one wishes to meet them unless of course, one has to.[50]
>
> The thing is from your perspective you have to deal with silly people. If one wishes to please them, there are a thousand ways of doing so. But if you give no importance to them and do not care for their pleasure and pain, as is the case, why lament the Mutiny? To think of Indians as of no worth and be indifferent to their happiness or unhappiness is the attitude of the English officials, and it is reflected in all the Government actions as well.[51]

Earlier episodes in the book illustrate the haughtiness of British officers of which Nazir Ahmad had first-hand experience. Throughout his career in the Revenue Service there must have been numerous such instances. The anecdote about his quitting a position because an Englishman criticized him for chewing betel amply illustrates how deeply such condescending behaviour hurt him.

Nazir Ahmad was also much perturbed by the view of Indian history as it was presented in the textbooks of government schools. He understood unity between Hindus and Muslims as a precondition for India's progress and prosperity, but felt that those books by their portrayal of Muslim rule in India instigated a growing alienation and hostility between both communities.[52]

Although he had to admit the political, technical, and scientific superiority of the British, Nazir Ahmad was still reluctant to accept them as superior human beings. He strongly refuted their claim to a higher morality. Therefore, he advised his countrymen to learn from the West but not to ape it since this would imply self-depreciation. He was highly critical of those young Indians with an English education who started to look down on everything Indian. To him, this attitude revealed a lack of pride and self-esteem on

50 Ibid., p. 79.
51 Ibid., p. 87.
52 Nazir Ahmad, *Mau'iza-e hasna*, Lahore, Majlis-e Taraqqi-e Adab, 1963, p. 202.

their part. And if these Indian 'gentlemen' hoped to gain access to English society by imitating the English lifestyle—as long as the English would be rulers and the Indians ruled, this was not to happen![53] Nazir Ahmad also stressed that the English supremacy was not based on such superficialities. Moreover, an uncritical imitation of the English lifestyle would not be in accordance with the Indian climate and would run counter to cultural norms with regard to manners, dress, and especially the position of women. Nazir Ahmad was an unrelenting supporter of the segregation of women which he understood to be central to Muslim ethics. On several occasions he stressed that the whole social system of sharif Indian Muslims rested on the system of *parda* (purdah) and that all—women as well as men—were accustomed to it. This conviction was not in conflict with his contribution to female education—women were supposed to operate within the boundaries of the home. One may add that as a man who was constantly on tour and away from his family, he had to rely on his wife to manage all household and family affairs and thus had first-hand experience of the benefits of female education.

The worst effect of a modern, English education, in Nazir Ahmad's view, was its lack of religious instruction. According to him, this would not only prevent a person from providing for the hereafter, it would seriously undermine the social order and above all the morals of society as a whole. This observation was based on his insights into the curricula of government schools and colleges as well as on his personal experience. As we have seen above, Nazir Ahmad's religious persuasions were deeply shaken during his time at Delhi College. His statements with regard to this event sometimes contradict each other, but as a whole he seems to have come to the conclusion that those doubts prevented him from turning into a narrow-minded Mulla and thus finally had a positive effect. However, religious themes agitated him until the end of his life. The main questions which he attempted to tackle were the relationship between reason and faith and the reconcilability/compatibility of religion/faith and life in the world (*din aur dunya*). After he had succeeded in life, built a career, and earned enough money to last him for the rest of his life, he devoted most of his time to religious themes. But poverty and disgrace because of indigence

53 Ibid., p. 228.

left a deep mark on him, and he wrote to Bashir that nothing good can ever come from poverty.[54] On the other hand, he repeatedly spoke of the high respect that his forefathers enjoyed due to their learning, despite being poor, whereas he described himself as a *sag-e dunya* (literally 'dog of the world', a man with worldly ambitions).[55] His advice to Bashir is derived from the attitude to worldly success he acquired as a mature man: It is important to control the carnal soul (*nafs*) with its greed and desires, to practice self-control and 'self-denial'.[56] Once he had secured his place and status in society, Nazir Ahmad was able to lead a simple life and dedicate himself to his faith and his community. That he nevertheless called himself a 'dog of the world' speaks of a permanent inner conflict he was unable to overcome.

Reading Nazir Ahmad's works one sometimes gets the feeling that he tries as much to convince himself as his readers. As C.M. Naim rightly remarked, for practical purposes he succeeded in separating the realms of religion and worldly life by dealing with them in different books, with his first two books for girls' education centred around worldly affairs and *Taubatu'n-Nasuh* dealing with religious duties. Thus,

> these novels of Nazir Ahmad are just the right kind of success stories that the Muslims of India needed to hear in the trying years after the failure of the Mutiny and the dissolution of all symbols of their temporal power. Separating the world of God from the world of Caesar—in effect though not, perhaps, in intention—and suggestive of an Islamic version of the Protestant ethic of success, these novels are precisely the kind of *adab* that both rulers and the ruled seem to have desired at that particular time in history.[57]

So far so good, but the story did not end there. In *Ruya-e Sadiqa* and in the religious books he wrote later, Nazir Ahmad very much tried to reconcile both aspects of life, with a varying degree of success. To me it seems that he grappled with the problem of how to combine rationality in everyday life with an unwavering religious faith. His attempt to present rational arguments for the existence of God, while at the same time stressing that matters of faith are beyond the reach of reason, demonstrate a dilemma faced not only by him. Similarly, like other Indian thinkers of the

54 Ibid., p. 201.
55 Ibid., p. 9.
56 Ibid., p. 201.
57 Naim, 'Prize-Winning *Adab*', p. 314.

time he tried to present rational explanations for religious beliefs and practices, not only of Muslims, but of Hindus as well. Thus, he gives pseudo-rational reasons for cow worship, vegetarianism, and the worship of the rivers Ganges and Jamuna by Hindus.[58] We may interpret such attempts as a reaction to Western critique of non-Christian faiths, but in this case they were directed to his fellow Muslims to create understanding and goodwill for the other community.

Nazir Ahmad was of the opinion that the Urdu translation of the Koran was his major contribution to the religious instruction of fellow Muslims. Although he felt that every Muslim should aspire to learn Arabic and always extolled his son to take his Arabic as seriously as his English, he couldn't fail to realize that the majority of Indian Muslims did not know Arabic and hence had no direct access to the original source of their faith, the Koran. Recourse to the Koran in his mind was a way to eliminate those customs and practices of Indian Muslims which had no basis in the Koran but were a major obstacle in their social, economic, and political progress and, equally important, would help them to overcome the enmity between different sects.

Though Nazir Ahmad was conservative in his interpretation of the Koran, many of his ideas of religious reform were far ahead of his—and even the present—time, and it must have pained him enormously to see his book on the Prophet's wives burn—almost in a reversal of the book burning scene he had presented in *Taubatu'n-Nasuh* in which works of classical poetry were committed to the flames. His other religious books were largely ignored, apparently for their controversial style and content. We can only support Ralph Russell's opinion that they 'need to be studied more thoroughly than they have been, and with much greater respect.'[59]

We may take it for certain that Nazir Ahmad's strong indictment of sectarian strife and agitation was to a large extent based on the experience of religious disputations in Delhi during his time at the college. Master Ram Chandra's conversion and the controversies that followed must have been a further reason for him to develop a pronounced aversion to religious disputation.

58 Nazir Ahmad, *Mau'iza-e hasna*, pp. 204–6.

59 *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature*, p. 118. Ralph Russell briefly discusses Nazir Ahmad's religious writings in pp. 118–20.

Conclusion

Nazir Ahmad's was a life full of contradictions—reflected in often self-contradictory writings and numerous volte-faces in his speeches. By character he tended to hold strong, sometimes extreme opinions, and reports from his contemporaries also prove that he was not always able to control his temper. On the other hand, circumstances time and again forced him into compromises until he finally retired from service and, thanks to the money he had accumulated while in service at Haidarabad, was in the position to live as a man of independent means. As mentioned above, he had to face opposition even then. Granted, the way he formulated his religious ideas at times was too colloquial, bordering on the disrespectful, but at the core of the controversies perhaps lay not so much his mode of expression as the very ideas which were unacceptable to the broader public. In some regards he was more orthodox than Saiyid Ahmad Khan. He took the Koran literally and rejected a metaphorical interpretation of concepts like paradise, hell, angels, etc. At the same time, however, he upheld reason as the sole guiding principle in all mundane matters and strongly urged every Muslim to acquire scientific knowledge and to use his/her power of judgment. In all likelihood this stress on reason and on scientific and also technological knowledge was based on Nazir Ahmad's time at Delhi College and on the lasting impact of outstanding personalities such as Master Ram Chandra and Zaka Ullah on him.

Contempt for narrowminded Muslim divines is a central theme in all of Nazir Ahmad's writings. He not only accuses them of preventing Muslims from taking up modern education and of perpetuating outlived religious prescriptions and sanctions which hinder the progress of Muslims in life, but also regards them as breeders of sectarian strife and discord between the religious communities in India. Time and again he proclaimed the ideal of a peaceful co-existence of all communities, in speeches as well as in writing. Thus, he interpreted the concept of *tauhid* (unity) as a basis for a 'universal religion' and a 'common brotherhood'.[60]

60 See Siddiqi, *Nazir Ahmad*, pp. 175–6; Nazir Ahmad, *Lekcaron ka Majmu'a, Jild Awwal*, pp. 602–24.

In Nazir Ahmad we encounter a very original thinker who was curious to absorb new ideas and develop his own concept of living successfully in the world without losing sight of the hereafter. In his own way he tried to find a balance between reason and faith, material success and ethical behaviour, firm belief in one's religion and tolerance toward other belief systems. His abilities, combined with a strong will and hard work, made him one of the great Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth century, but there can be no doubt that the Delhi College prepared some of the ground for his later achievements, added polish and direction to his abilities, and provided him with the connections he needed to start his career. Innumerable utterances bear testimony to the fact that the memories of the Delhi College remained a source of inspiration for him until the end of his life.

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* The transcription in the book and the index follows Platt's Classical Urdu and Hindi Dictionary. However, for better readability, diacritical signs have been omitted with the exception of the articles by Ebba Koch and C.M. Naim.

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