

Exploring Medieval India
through Persian Sources

Samīkṣikā - 17

General Editor

Pratapanand Jha

The Samīkṣikā Series is aimed at compiling the research papers presented by the distinguished scholars and specialists in the seminars organized by the National Mission for Manuscripts. The seminars provide an interactive forum for scholars to present to a large audience, ideas related to the knowledge contained in India's textual heritage.

Exploring Medieval India through Persian Sources

Editor

Ali Athar



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Foreword

THE National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM), New Delhi, is making untiring, efforts to retrieve all hidden literary treasures across different topics and is making serious attempts to disseminate such knowledge to the entire world through publications, seminars and conferences.

Historical accounts vary. So is the history of medieval India. It was a period when north India underwent sociocultural/religious/political changes. Different historians have presented its history in different hues and colours based on their studies from different angles. Persian sources of medieval India needs further explorations and tapping of new materials of study for new interpretations and reappraisal of historical facts. These sources include political chronicles, biographical accounts, Insha literature (court correspondence), mystic literature (*malfuzat, maktubat*, etc.), *dastur* of Amal (books on royal instructions and guidance), *farmān* (royal proclamation), *nishan, parwānā* (land and revenue-related documents), foreigners' accounts, vernacular literature, epigraphy, numismatics, archaeology and paintings.

This volume is a collection of eleven interesting articles presented in a national seminar on “Exploring Medieval India through Persian Sources” held at the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University in 2016, in which the medieval Indian history was revisited based on various Persian sources.

I am sure, these studies will ignite further researchers to showcase the world so far unknown Indian intellect and history.

Prof. Pratapanand Jha

Director

National Mission for Manuscripts

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	v
– <i>Prof. Pratapand Jha</i>	
Introduction	1
– <i>Prof Ali Athar</i>	
1. Taj ul Maathir	5
– <i>Ali Athar</i>	
2. Afghan Historiography of Fifteenth-sixteenth Century and Afghans in India: Some Glimpses and a Relook at Afghan History	23
– <i>M. Waseem Raja</i>	
3. Economic Condition of Medieval Bengal as Reflected in Persian Sources	33
– <i>Abdul Motleb Shaikh</i>	
4. Reconstructing the Past through Malfuzāt Literature: The Case of Fawaid-ul-Fuad	45
– <i>Amit Dey</i>	
5. Reflection of Muslim Intellectual Life in the Akhbar-ul-Akhyar: A Tazkirā of the Sixteenth Century	57
– <i>Aneesa Iqbal Sabir</i>	
6. Medieval Monuments of Qasbā Nāgaur: Study Based on Persian Inscriptions	71
– <i>Jibraeil</i>	
7. New Light on the War of Successions (1657-58 CE): Based on Two Newly-Discovered Nishāns of	85

Prince Muhammad Shuja and Prince Dara Shukoh

– *M.A. Haque*

8. Cultural Aspect of Badaun: As Reflected in Arabic and Persian Inscriptions (Thirteenth-fourteenth Century) 93
– *Mohammad Nafeesh*
9. Practice of the Robes of Honour under the Mughals 105
– *Mohammad Anash*
10. Beneficiaries of Madad-i Ma‘ash, Rozīnah and Hiba: Some Reflections on Persian Documents of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries from Malwa 109
– *Nishat Manzar*
11. Shāh Jahān-Nāmā: Imperial Views of History 123
– *Gulfishan Khan*
- Contributors* 143

Introduction

THE archival, non-archival, numismatics, epigraphy and archaeological data form the backbone for historical research of all periods of study. It is noticeable that the establishment of the Turkish rule in India provided a new variety of historical material, particularly in Persian, which no doubt is extremely rich among all the categories of sources for the study of medieval India. Persian sources of Delhi Sultanate and Mughals give us immense information on dynastic development, imperialistic policies and consolidation, conflict among the rank holders, relations with the rulers of different regions, particularly the political bond and conflict between the Sultans and the local rulers. A large number of Persian records of the medieval period also contain varieties of information on economic development (agricultural production, trade and commerce, etc.), military history, etc. One area which is the need of the present society is the study of mystic records for understanding the society and culture of medieval India. Influence of the Turkish rulers and concentration of Sufi saints towards India led to far-reaching cultural and socio-economic changes in the life and culture of the country. The auxiliary sources like literature, architecture, paintings, epigraphs and coins also deserve our attention.

Many new institutions such as *madrassa* (both school and college), *karkhana* (workshop cum storehouses), *dar al shifa* (hospitals), revenue related terms (*iqta*, *khalsa*, *mansab*), *thānās* (police posts), etc. played an important role to set up a sound society in medieval India. Such pieces of information are satisfactorily available in the Persian sources during the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire.

Apart from a large number of political chronicles, there appeared non-political literature of different types: poetical works, mystic records (*malfuzat*, *maktubat*, etc.), geographical accounts, autobiographies, *tazkiras*, revenue records, hydraulic management (water structure:

tanks, wells, step wells), general works on religion, treatises on science and translations from other languages. The richness of Persian sources, available in different archives is also beyond estimation. There are varieties of documents like *farmāns*, *parwānās*, *arz-dashts*, *nishans*, etc. which are adequately preserved in different archives of the country. Many state archives even possess enormous material both in Persian and in vernacular languages. Besides these, the manuscripts are also in private collections possessed by many business families, *Jāgīrdārs* and revenue officials, which provide very relevant information.

This volume contains new researches on various unutilized and underutilized Persian sources of medieval India and highlights their importance.

The editor in his article on *Taj ul Maathir* has provided details on the themes included in this work which reflects the excellence and worth of this volume. It contains the history of military expeditions undertaken by Shahabuddin Ghosi, Qutbuddin Aibek and Iltutmish. Their relations with the autonomous Indian rulers, rules of governance, military technology, war equipment, and qualities of war horses and elephants are studied apart from information on the flora and fauna, clothes, ornaments, etc.

Dr M. Waseem Raja has explored the importance of Afghan historiography and has given a fresh interpretation to the Afghan history in India during fifteenth-sixteenth century.

Dr Abdul Motleb Shaikh has provided the study on the economic history of medieval Bengal based on Persian and European sources. His article examines the development in agriculture and agricultural productions, metallurgy, shipbuilding, trade and commerce, etc.

Prof. Amit Dey has provided fresh interpretation to history on basis of mystic literature and its utilization for relooking into the past. He has made *Fawaid ul Fuad* a case study.

Another Malfuz literature the *Akhbar ul Akhyar* has been utilized by Dr Aneesa Iqbal Sabir for reconstruction and study of the intellectual life in the sixteenth-century India.

Dr Jibraeil has introduced and utilized the Persian inscription in the study of medieval monuments of Qasba Nāgaur. This research article is important for corrective understanding of the monuments which are in dilapidated conditions.

The post-Shahjahan war of succession among his sons has seen a fresh reappraisal on the basis of newly discovered *nishans* by Dr M.A. Haque. The addition of fresh documents by Dr Haque provides a renewed interpretation to the event.

Dr Mohammad Nafeesh has utilized the epigraphical evidences for the study of the cultural aspect of Badaun. He has utilized both Persian and Arabic inscriptions for his interpretation of the cultural life of Badaun. The study of these inscriptions along with the literary sources has enhanced the vision of understanding the subject.

Dr Mohammad Anas has discussed in detail the practice of Robes of Honour under the Mughals. The ceremonial practice and customs have been highlighted in his paper.

Prof. Nishat Manzar's article on the institution of land grants of Malwa during the seventeenth and eighteenth century provides detailed accounts on the nature of *madad-i-ma'ash*, *rozinah* and *hiba*. This paper highlights the grants sanctioned to women and to their extended family. The succession of the assignments after the demise of the women assignees goes to women from the family itself. Individual and collective grants too have been scrutinized. This paper provides the details of the size of the family or individual along with the size of the plot assigned. Movable and immovable properties both formed the part of the assignment.

Dr Gulfishan Khan has examined the unutilized manuscript of the *Badshahnamah* which is the first volume amongst the three written by Abdul Hamid Lahori. This volume describes the bureaucracy and officials of the empire and their multifarious roles in the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal Empire. This work also contains the foreign policy, architectural patronage, especially the *Rauzah-i-Munawwara* known as the Taj Mahal.

In short, this book would be a valuable possession for the researchers of medieval Indian history who would find here an access to new documents for understanding and interpreting history related to Persian sources.

Prof. Ali Athar
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Taj ul Maathir

Ali Athar

THE *Taj ul Maathir* of Sadruddin Hasan Nizami is a very important source material for the study of the Delhi Sultanate since its nascent control over northern India till the first quarter of the thirteenth century. K.A. Nizami terms the work as the first official history of the Delhi Sultanate.¹ Nizami further analyses the circumstances under which this work was completed. According to him:

Ajam was going down the abyss, it must have been a psychological problem to transform his pessimistic and despondent moods into hope, buoyancy and confidence without which the story of the birth and bloom of a new empire could not be written.²

This work has been studied by various historians like Sadruddin Awfi, Minhaj us Siraj, Ziauddin Barani,³ Kabiruddin and Ferishta.⁴ They all give credence to its credibility and authenticity. Modern historians too have made extensive study of the work with varied analyses, compliments and criticisms. C.A. Storey and H.M. Elliot consider the work as uninformative and verbose lacking historical details.⁵ I.H. Qureishi,

¹ K.A. Nizami, 1983, *On History and Historians of Medieval India*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, p. 55. Bhagwat Saroop too considers as the first book of the Delhi Sultanate in his English translation of the work *Tajuddin Hasan Nizami's Taj ul Maathir: The Crown of the Glorious Deeds*, Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998, p. XIII.

² Nizami, 1983: 55.

³ Ziauddin Barani, 1862, *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, ed. Sayid Ahmed Khan, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, p. 14.

⁴ Nizami, 1983: 57.

⁵ C.A. Storey, 1939, *Persian Literature: A Biographical Survey Section*,

K.A. Nizami and Hasan Askari compliment *Taj ul Maathir* for all its reliability, correct historical facts and more revealing information though it would appear to a casual reader as a literary work rather than historical.⁶

According to Nizami the manuscript of the *Taj ul Maathir* ends in 1217 CE, while, Sir Henry Elliot confided that a manuscript of one Nawab Ziauddin came up to 1229.⁷

The present work, which is a transcript of the Asfiya Library, Hyderabad, consists of the following information which is compiled in three volumes located in the Library of the Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University.⁸ The details of the themes contained in the *Taj ul Maathir* have been minutely identified and noted with the respective page numbers for the benefit of the readers.

جلد اول

(Vol. I)

افتتاح سخن⁹

Introduction

شرح مرتب این مجموع¹⁰

The author's word about compilation of this book

London: Luzac & Co., p. 294. H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, 2015, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Delhi: Kitab Mahal, vol. II, p. 205.

⁶ I.H. Qureishi, 1942, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Sh. M. 12 Ashraf, Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore, p. 4. K.A. Nizami, 1983, op. cit., pp. 55-58 for his analysis of the "Taj ul Maathir". Hasan Askari, 1963, "Taj ul Maathir", *Patna University, Journal*, 3: 56-57.

⁷ Nizami, 1983: 60.

⁸ Transcript nos. 94-96.

⁹ *Taj ul Maathir*: Asfiya Library Collection Transcript in the Centre of Advanced Study Library, Aligarh Muslim University, vol. I, transcript no. 94, p. 1.

¹⁰ Ibid., transcript no. 94, vol. I, p. 7.

11

حقیقت شناخت شعر

The realistic poetry

12

صفت مشورت و مشورت طبع عقیم

The description and advice for the final publication

13

صفت زشت رویان

A description of the hideous looking people

14

ذکر شکایت اخوان خوان زمان و منافقان در قلم آمد

Description of his grievances against his contemporaries particularly his detractors

15

عتاب دوستان جفا کار

Indignation at cruel friends

16

وصف سخن

A satire on his time

17

در تربیت سخن

In the training of discourse

18

سبدا الكلام فى الفتوح والمدائح والصفات

Introduction on the conquest, praise and attributes

¹¹ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 94, vol. I, p. 10.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

ذکر فتح اجمیر¹⁹

The description about the victory of Ajmer

رسالت فرستادن برائے اجمیر²⁰

To send a mission for Ajmer

صفت پیلان²¹

The description of elephants

صفت تیغ²²

The description of sword

صفت نیزه²³

The description of spear

صفت تیر²⁴

The description of arrow

صفت باغ²⁵

The description of garden

صفت گل²⁶

The description of flowers

¹⁹ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 94, vol. I, p. 87.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

صفت گلزار ²⁷

The description of garden

ذکر آب ²⁸

The description of water

در عدل و انصاف ²⁹

About justice and equity

تفویض ایالت اجمیر به پسر رائے پتورا ³⁰

To assign the administration of Ajmer to the son of Rai Pithora

فتح دہلی ³¹

The conquest of Delhi

صفت قلع ³²

The description of the fort

صفت لشکر گاہ ³³

The description of the military camp

ذکر ایالت کہرام و سامانہ ³⁴

The description of the administration: *kihram* and *samana* were entrusted to Sultan Qutbuddin

²⁷ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 94, vol. I, p. 113.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

صفت اسباب سلاهی واریاب طرب³⁵

The description of musical instruments and musicians

صفت ساقی³⁶

The description of the cup-bearer

صفت مئی³⁷

The description of wine

صفت سواری بادشاه از جهت شکار ولوازم آن³⁸

The description of the hunting expedition of the king and its paraphernalia

صفت رفتن اسپان³⁹

The description of the horse movement

ذکر انهزام جتوان وکشتن او در جنگ⁴⁰

The description about the defeat of Jatwan and his death in the battle

صفت شب وکواکب⁴¹

The description of night and stars

صفت ماه نو⁴²

The description of a new month

³⁵ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 94, vol. I, p. 139.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

صفت روز⁴³

The description of day

صفت هزیمت کفار⁴⁴

The description about the defeat of Kuffar (infidels)

صفت تیغ⁴⁵

The description of the swords

استخلاص سیرت و دہلی⁴⁶

Annexation of Meerut and Delhi

ذکر عصبان ہراج برادر رائے اجمیر⁴⁷

The description about the children of Har Raj, brother of Rai
Ajmer

صفت مبارزان⁴⁸

The description of warriors

صفت ہزیمت⁴⁹

The description of the defeat

صفت احسان و سخاوت⁵⁰

The description of kindness and generosity

⁴³ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 94, vol. I, p. 168.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

صفت خریزه زریں ⁵¹

The description of musk melon

صفت دبیر و کتاب او ⁵²

The description of writer and his book

صفت فصل تابستان ⁵³

The description of summer crop

نہضت مبارک بر صوب غزنہ ⁵⁴

March towards Ghazna province

صفت رفتار اسپ ⁵⁵

The description on the speed of horse

صفت سرائے ⁵⁶

The description of inn (*sarāi*)

صفت فصل خریف ⁵⁷

The description of *kharif* crop

فصل شتا ⁵⁸

The winter crop

⁵¹ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 94, vol. I, p. 211.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

جلد دوم

(Vol. II)

صفت آتش ⁵⁹

The description of the fire

صفت بیماری ⁶⁰

The description of illness

صفت طبیب ⁶¹

The description of the physician

بشارت صحت ⁶²

Good news about the recovery of health

صفات باغ ⁶³

The description of the garden

صفت جشن ⁶⁴

The description of the feast

صفت ساقیان ⁶⁵

The description of cup-bearers

⁵⁹ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 95, vol. II, p. 234.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

صفت حباب بر سر پیاله ⁶⁶

The description of bubbles at the brim of the cup

صفت آرباب طرب ⁶⁷

The description of musicians

صفت چنگ ⁶⁸

The description of *Chang*

صفت بریط ⁶⁹

The description of (barbat) lute

صفت کمانچه ⁷⁰

The description of violin

صفت ناله ⁷¹

The description of flute (reed)

صفت دف ⁷²

The description of *daf* (tambourine)

ذکر رجوع شاه جهان بمقر عز و دولت و مرکز سعادت (صفت روز و صبح) ⁷³

The return of the king to his kingdom (description of the days and night)

⁶⁶ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 95, vol. II, p. 271.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

صفت آرائش شہر ⁷⁴

The description about beautification of the city at the arrival of
the king

صفت بہار ⁷⁵

The description of the spring

صفت طیور ⁷⁶

The description of birds

صفت اجتماعات علماء دین ⁷⁷

The description about jurisprudence and clerics

ذکر مسجد آدینہ دہلی ⁷⁸

The description of the Jama Mosque of Delhi

ذکر نہضت مبارک پر سمت قلعہ کول و خط بنارس ⁷⁹

The royal march towards Koil Fort and Benares region

صفت آب ⁸⁰

The description of water

استخلاص حصن قلعہ کول و ضبط آن زمین ⁸¹

The capture of the fort of Koil and occupation of its lands

⁷⁴ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 95, vol. II, p. 281.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

صفت اسپان⁸²

The description of horses

صفت فیل⁸³

The description of an elephant

صفت اسب⁸⁴

The description of a horse

جنگ بنارس باجیت چندر که رائے قنوج بود (صفت لشکر)⁸⁵

The battle of Banaras with Jit Chandr, ruler of Qannauj
(description of army)

صفت اصابت رائے⁸⁶

The description of right decision

صفت رفتن بجنگ⁸⁷

The description about the march for war

صفت تیغ⁸⁸

The description of a sword

صفت تیر اندازی⁸⁹

The description of archery

⁸² *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 95, vol. II, p. 312.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

صفت تیغ	90
The description of sword	
صفت نیزه	91
The description of spear	
صفت خم گمند	92
The description of bows	
صفت تیر اندازان	93
The description of archers	
صفت سردان خصم	94
The description of warriors	
صفت عدل وانصاف	95
The description of justice	
صفت دبیر	96
The description of the secretary	
ذکر اتفاق عزیمت رایات اعلیٰ بطرف غزنه	97
The description about the imperial march to Ghazna	

⁹⁰ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 95, vol. II, p. 344.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 347.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

ذکر نہضت مبارک بطرف کول و تفویض ولایت آن موضع بملک الامرا حسام الدین غلبک⁹⁸

The description about march to Koil and assignment of its administration to Hisamuddin Ghalbak

ذکر مراجعت بحضرت دہلی⁹⁹

The description about return to Delhi

ذکر فتح اجمیر کرت دوم¹⁰⁰

The description about the victory of Ajmer on Kirrat the second

صفت آثار عدل¹⁰¹

The description of justice

ذکر فتح قلعه تهنکر¹⁰²

The description about the conquest of the fort of Thankar

صفت گرفتن حصار¹⁰³

The description about its fortification and its occupation

ذکر تفویض ایالت تهنکر بہ بہاء الدین طغرل¹⁰⁴

The description about the assigning of the administration of Thankar to Bahauddin Tughril

ذکر فتح کالیور و مراجعت بدر الملک¹⁰⁵

The description about the victory of Kalivar (Gwaliar) and return to the capital

⁹⁸ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 95, vol. II, p. 381.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 424.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 433.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 438.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

جلد سوم

(Vol. III)

ذکر جنگ نہروالا وانہزام رائے نہروالا¹⁰⁶

The description about the battle of Naharwālā and the defeat of Rai of Naharwālā

صفت خنجر¹⁰⁷

The description of dagger

صفت قلم¹⁰⁸

The description of pen

ذکر فتح قلعہ کالنجر¹⁰⁹

The description about the conquest of Kālīnjar Fort

صفت حصار¹¹⁰

The description of its fortification

صفت تمرد و جرات¹¹¹

The description about bravery

صفت در سخن ناندیشیدہ گفتن¹¹²

The description of thoughtless discourse

¹⁰⁶ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 96, vol. III, p. 464.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 507.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 542.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 544.

صفت گریه و اندوه¹¹³

The description of grief

ذکر تفویض قلعه کالنجریه هزیرالدین حسن ارناب¹¹⁴

The description about assigning the Kālīñjar fort to Hazbaruddin
Hasan Arnab

ذکر مراجعت خداوند سلطان السلاطین اعلی الله او امره از¹¹⁵

خوارزم و غزو و کوکر

The description about the returning of Sultan Mohammad bin Sam
(May God elevate his orders) from Khwarizm, Ghaz and Kokar

صفت عذر و قصد¹¹⁶

The description of excuse and aim

صفت سجعان و مبارزان¹¹⁷

The description of warriors

صفت اصابت رائے¹¹⁸

The description of right decision

صفت عزم¹¹⁹

The description of resolution

صفت فصل خزان¹²⁰

The description of autumn season

¹¹³ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 96, vol. III, p. 548.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 554.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 565.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 569.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 580.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 581.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 583.

صفت اسبمان¹²¹

The description of horses

صفت سخن گفتن در تدبیر¹²²

The description of administrative discourse

صفت تیرانداز و مفرد¹²³

The description of archers and soldiers

صفت قلعه¹²⁴

The description of fort

صفت لشکر کفار¹²⁵

The description of Kuffar army

صفت لشکر اسلام¹²⁶

The description of Islamic army

ذکر شهادت خداوند سلطان السلاطین معز الدنیا والدين محمد سام اثار الله برهانه و آثار رضوانه¹²⁷

The description about the martyrdom of Sultan Muizzuddin
Mohammad bin Sam

مذمت کمال¹²⁸

The description of accomplishment

¹²¹ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 96, vol. III, p. 590.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 591.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 595.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 615.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 616.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 617.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 636.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 636.

ذکر وفات¹²⁹

The description of death

صفت گریه¹³⁰

The description of grief

ذکر مرتب شدن امرای اطراف در سلك خدمت و مسلم شدن¹³¹

The description about organizing elites of adjoining areas

ممالک هندو سمنند بملک قطب الدین ایبک¹³²

The region of India and Sindh under Qutbuddin Aibak

صفت مدح شاه لوهور¹³³

The description in the praise of Shah Lahor

صفت قوت دین و شریعت¹³⁴

The description about the power of Islam and Shariah

صفت اسپ¹³⁵

The description of horse

ذکر وفات خداوند سلطان سعید قطب الدین و الدین ایبک افاض الله¹³⁶

علی روضة الرحمة

The description about the death of Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak

¹²⁹ *Taj ul Maathir*, transcript no. 96, vol. III, p. 637.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 652.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 653.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 654.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 657.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 658.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 662.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 669.

Afghan Historiography of Fifteenth-sixteenth Century and Afghans in India

Some Glimpses and a Relook at Afghan History

M. Waseem Raja

بنام خداوند جن و خرد
 کزین بر تر اندیشه بر ناگزرد
 خداوند نام و خداوند جائے
 خداوند روزی دہی رہنمائی

ہیندیم از پارسی بیگانہ ام
 ماہ نو باشم تھی پیمانہ ام

Introduction

THE Persian language has an important place in the myriad cultural pattern of India and extremely useful in reconstructing the history of medieval India. It is important in rewriting the history of Afghans in India, more particularly the second incursion of Afghans in India and establishment of an Afghan empire in India during fifteenth-sixteenth century. It was but natural that Persian language received tremendous impetus during this period. During the period enormous literature bearing on political, social, religious and various aspects of the life and conditions of the people of Hindustān has been produced in Persian. Historical works (*taẓkirās*), biographical works, poetic compositions, works on mathematics, astronomy, astrology, art of administration, art of war, medicine, etc. have been produced in Persian, but here we will only examine a few important works which reflect on the First Afghan empire in India. Historiography of Lodi Afghans leads us to understand Sur Afghan historiography also, as during the short reign of Sur's also

a plethora of literature had developed. With that we come across with a new trend in Afghan historiography. This paper delves deep into the merits and demerits of the Persian historiography of Afghans in India, as how the treatment was done to the Persian historiography of the Afghans.

Study in Afghan Diaspora in India

The theme of Afghan historiography can be studied from different perspectives but it is more convenient to study the theme from “Second Afghan Diaspora”¹ perspective, as we find that it was a huge migration of Afghans during Lodi and Sur periods after they acquired the Afghan empire in India. The Second Afghan Diaspora caused a big inflow of Afghans into India. The Afghans were settled at different locations of the empire and an elite aristocracy, through assignment of *iqta/jāgīrs* and other higher assignments, was made in India. The diasporic communities they founded in India are central to any study of Afghan history, for it was among them that there emerged the earliest historical works especially devoted to the “Afghans”. The Afghan diaspora in India has generally been treated as separate from the greater narrative of “Afghan history (Halim 1974; Qanungo 1965; Siddiqi 1971, 1982). Rather than seeing migration as a central characteristic of the Afghan past, work on the Indo-Afghans has been regarded as more properly a part of Indian than immaculate Afghan studies (Green 2008).

Shaping of Afghan Historiography during Fifteenth-sixteenth Century and Its Merits

Thirteenth-century Indo-Persian historiography, introduced and followed within the parameters of Islamic traditions outside India, produced works in India to suit the religious and intellectual needs of a newly-formed Afghan empire that brought the Islamic flags into the interior of Indian subcontinent (Habibullah 1961: 253). But period of study saw some drastic changes as we study the theme. From marginalizing to the periphery of Afghan history we reach to centrality of Afghan history. The Persian Afghan works produced in India between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are not the “blue bibliotheque” but the core of Afghan

¹ “First Afghan Diaspora” appeared when Mahmud Ghaznavi had invaded India in eleventh century and Punjab remained part of Afghan empire for quite long.

history. For it was in this diaspora that many salient features and structures of the sense of Afghan historical identity crystallized.

It was during that period that Afghan historiography took shape in writings that were to influence successive generations of Afghan writers and historians. Those works brought more secure definitions that wrought weighty and durable casts of identity. This may be just in written terms, but it brought a historical consciousness among the Afghans. It took shape in connection with the experience of migration to India and the encounter there with forms of social, religious and political organization that differed from their own, including large-scale formations like cosmopolitan and imperial. With migration to India, the social foundations of these diffuse bands of tribesmen were shaken. Though such pressures could be contained during the period of Afghan political supremacy in northern India under the Afghan Lodi and Sur rulers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Afghans' defeat and gradual incorporation into the Mughal state after 962/1555 brought a new urgency to questions of Afghan self-definition (cf. Arlinghaus 1988; Nichols 2001).

The early histories of the Afghans represented an attempt to articulate an identity among categories drawn from the encounter between the Afghans' own forms of social organization and the cosmopolitan environment of India. The emergence of an emphasis on tribal affiliation over and against other forms of social alignment and organization formed the most enduring. So we accrue here three separate identities of the Afghans; one which emanated from the First Diaspora under the Ghaznavids, second, it was during the Lodis and Surs period that saw Afghan despotism emerging, and third, we found post-Afghan rule identity as reflected in the literature produced during the height of Mughal power. This period marked departure from the previous Islamic pattern of history writing found in thirteenth century in India and that it was unique in setting trends for the times to come.²

Rizqullah Mushtaqui's Waqiate-Mushtaqui

This magnum opus is written in 1572 by the court historian of the Lodis, Rizqullah Mushtaqui who got the opportunity to serve under two

² Sahay, Sangeeta, "A re-look at the Indo-Persian historiography of fourteenth century", acedemia.edu.

illustrious medieval rulers: Sikandar Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi. Rizqullah Mushtaqui by any standard emerges as a great literary figure with prolific style and equal command over prose and poetry with his pen name reportedly “Rajan”/Mushtaqui).

His works are best reflection of the age he belonged to, mostly focusing on the state of affairs of Lodi sultāns and proceeds to Surs along with others. His work *Waqiate-Mushtaqui* is authenticated from various other sources as he provides eyewitness account of the events or he records only those incidents or anecdotes which he had heard from authentic sources.

We get information about Sultān Sikandar Lodi having reverence for Islamic religious figures, *ulemā*, *mashāikh*, Syeds (علماء , مشائخ , سيد) and other revered figures. He writes that Sultān Sikandar was a *namāzī* and a devout figure. He readily provided food for the destitute, poor and needy. He had the custom of freeing prisoners on Eid. Some customary reflections are also there like he found *purdāh* for high-caste ladies and elites. Rizqullah writes that on occasions like Urs ladies were prohibited from going to *dargāh* (درگاہ) or were not allowed to the sanctum sanctorum. Lodis had a strong web of spy network, as reported by Rizqullah.

His work reflects on the customs, traditions habits and etiquettes that the medieval population had in and around the capital city. He extensively wrote on Hindus of India, their customs and traditions, their businesses, their trade and commerce, their lifestyles, etc.

Demerits

As we notice in many cases, medieval literature of any kind is not free from insertions of discussion on unusual supernatural themes, it has not left even great scholars like Rizqullah. Some metaphysical/supernatural characters are also found in Rizqullah Mushtaqui’s work. Despite his account being authenticated and verified, some information has crept in which appears to be based only on hearsay or just a figment of imagination. For example, he finds Sher Shah Suri having 10,000 queens at his pleasure resort at Gaur palace. While analysing this important work, we come across various shortfalls in it. We notice chronological sequence missing, which leads us to speculate in those grey areas.

Contradictory statements are also replete in his work. At one point he finds Sultan Sikandar as *namāzī* (نمازی) and at other he found him to be a drunkard and also a clean shaven, both acts are not signs of a good Muslim as prescribed by *shariā* (شریعه). This work is mostly north India-centric and hardly Sultāns of south India find a mention (Jeelani 2008: 180-88). This work was published from Raza Library with I.H. Siddiqui and W.H. Siddiqui being joint editors.

Afsānāh-ī-Shahan of Muhammad Kabir

The work *Afsānāh-ī-Shahan* is another valuable treatise written by Muhammad Kabir, son of Shaykh Isma‘l Hizyani, is a valuable work for the study of the Afghan regimes in north India, which were displaced by the Mughals (Khan 1987).

Written under the Mughals, it throws light upon the outlook of the Afghan elite after its members had been superseded as rulers. The *Afsānāh-ī-Shahan* is not widely available to scholars.³ This manuscript is now in the India Office Library⁴ and the reason for giving it the title of *Afsānāh-ī-Shahan* is given in the author’s introductory remarks:

The people say: *the feeble slave*, Muhammad Kabir, son of Shaykh Isma‘l Hizyani, son-in-law of Shaykh Khalil Haqqani, is a candidate “for God’s grace for this narrative of the Afghan who with the help of God ruled Dehli and in whose name *khutbāh* was read. As histories often differ, therefore I brought into writing, those narratives (حکایت *hikāyat*) which were reliable and accepted in this coarse and ungrammatical Persian so that they do not get lost”. The *Afsānāh-ī-Shahan* is a collection of 140 anecdotes (حکایت *hikāyat*) of the Afghan rulers of the Lodi and the Sur dynasties. The *Afsānāh-ī-Shahan* appears to have been written in the beginning of the Mughal emperor Nur al-Din Jahangir’s reign, as the name of the Mughal sovereign occurs only once in the text towards its

³ It was thought that the manuscript in the British Museum was unique. About thirty years ago, Peter Hardy was able to identify another manuscript in the papers of the late Sir John Kennaway.

⁴ This being so, for the purpose of editing the two extant manuscripts have been collected; the earlier one copied in 1136/1723-24 is India Office MS. 4686, folios, 185, and the later one is in the British Museum MS ADD 24,409, folios, 237 which was written in 1189/1775.

end. This work is one of the national histories of South Asia. Its author, in order to overcome the grief of the untimely death of his only son, dedicated himself to the writing of the history of the Afghans who had ruled Delhi and Agra. Muhammad Kabir is thus firmly placed in the camp of the Afghan national historiographers.

It thus appears from the preceding account that the author used the sources that he had “considered reliable and accepted ones” in the differing chronicles. He has, however, nowhere mentioned any of his authorities and sources.

Merits

The merit of the *Afsānāh-ī-Shahan* is that its author devotes each anecdote (حکایت *hikāyat*) to a particular event or a personality. He, thus, in that *hikāyat* narrates all the possible details concerning that event or personality. He unknowingly follows the growth and differentiation model when he builds up the Afghan history from bottom to the top and thus precludes every chance of missing the then known details of characters he is describing.

The source throws light on the Afghan concept of sovereignty as initiated by Sultan Bahlol Lodi when he based it on the ethics of Afghan brotherhood in which the sultan was one among the equals.

So Sultan Kala said that such a throne be prepared (lit. set right) that all our brethren may sit on it. When Kala uttered these words, the courtiers said “There are fifty or sixty thousand brethren in the company of the king. How can a throne be set for all the brethren”? Then he said: “It should be made at least so large as to accommodate fifty or sixty brethren” [حکایت *hikāyat* eight].

The *Afsānāh-ī-Shahan* gives a wealth of details about Bihar which is to be found nowhere else. The affairs of Cheru Maharath have been mentioned by other authorities also but Muhammad Kabir tells us many other things such as Maharath’s highway robberies; his harassing tactics; his jungle habitation in Ujjain territory

The *Afsānāh-ī-Shahan* gives vital insights into the cultural life, and the patronage extended by the Afghan rulers to men of learning and talents. Sultān Sikandar Lodi’s religious activities in Bihar, described in *hikāyat* twenty and elsewhere, make an interesting reading. The sultān

used to call on the *ulamā* (علماء – theological scholars) and *awliyā* (أولياء — saintly personages) of the town. The source records that the Afghans, besides the pursuit of their profession of agriculture in Roh, were horse traders, and they took horses to Hindustān for sale.

Muhammad Kabir’s Concept of History

Muhammad Kabir’s concept of history is thus identical to that of Mir Khawand which, according to Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, still holds good: “The second condition is,” he writes, “that the historian should describe all aspects of every affair. In other words, just as he recounts the merits, charities, justice and mercy of great men, similarly he should describe, and not seek to hide, their wicked and mean acts. If he considers it prudent, he may describe his (wicked acts) openly; if not, he should resort to hints, insinuations and indirect remarks. A hint to the wise is enough,” This being the case, useful material can be gleaned from the source for reconstructing the political, military, ethnic, cultural, religious and economic history of India.

Abbas Khan Sharvani’s⁵ Tārīkh-i-Sher Shah Suri

Even the previous historian is not free from a certain element of bias; with lot of inputs from other writers, his work is not truly based on his own account. Abbas Khan derived much of his information from Muzaffar Khan,⁶ nephew of Masnad-i-‘Ali I’sa Khan.

The analyst finds a noticeable element of bias in his work in favour of the Sarwanis, the Afghan tribes to which the author belonged to. Also, it must not be overlooked that nostalgia for a lost cause is not the best of a framework for history writing. Much of the ideological structure with which Abbas Khan writes is contained in the lengthy discourses which he puts into the mouth of his characters.

The work *Tārīkh-i-Sher Shah Suri* considers Afghan empire of India as a prized one for the Afghans and thus he doesn’t fail in praising the

⁵ Abbas Khan was moreover an Afghan, an Indian Afghan of the sixteenth century; this orientation is also evident in his moral framework. He believes in the Afghan commonwealth of which Sher Shah was the indisputable hero, a kind of father figure as he receded in time and history.

⁶ He was a Sarwani like Abbas Khan and his daughter was married to Abbas.

Afghan commonwealth. The empire which was acquired by the Lodis and the Surs inevitably belonged to all Afghans, to all Afghan tribal chiefs who eventually formed ruling clique and Afghan aristocracy. They were all invited to come to Hindustān to rule or enjoy the fruit of the efforts of their brave leaders.

Abbas Khan provides details of *jahāndārī* (جهانداری) and its various elements, and provides prerequisites for a ruler as how an Islamic ruler should rule over his subjects. He provides several points and dilates upon the considerations like *adl*, *riyāyā-parasti*, *behbood* (عدل, ریایه, بهبود, پرستی) and several others which should guide a ruler almost similar to instruction in Machiavelli's *The Prince* and its anecdotes. The concept of welfare state is visible there in his writing as the Afghan sultān was supposed to treat his subjects as his own. The sultān is the "protector of his people". This category includes each and every one within the kingdom, particularly the helpless, indigent and poor, women and children, for whom the sultān is a trust.⁷

Abbas Khan's social philosophy reflects the man's world in which he lives. A man's active and public life was lived among menfolk, among his peers and his relatives. Kinsmen were close to an individual; they rendered advice as and when necessary, and one was required to listen to them and explain his action, and also to mediate between those who had quarrelled.

The ruler should continuously check the books of his tax collected, and tally them with the records of the *muqaddams* (مقدم). Government is the source of protection to women and children; the subjects should be protected from the tyranny of the officials.⁸ The *raiyat* (رعیت) had thus to be protected from the depredations of both the nobility and the functionaries. "The *raiyat* (رعیت) are innocent", Sher Shah is reported to have said: "They submit to those who are in power. If I oppress them, they will desert the land and the kingdom will be ruined and it will be a long time before the country is repopulated."

⁷ "The weak are the trust of God given to the charge of the powerful so that under their protection they may remain safe from the assaults of tyranny and the torture of the oppressors." – Tr. Imamuddin 1964: 17

⁸ *Tārīkh-ī-Sher Shah Suri*, p. 34.

Abbas Khan is not very original in these opinion regarding women; women find mention by a host of other medieval writer, both Persians and Indians, Muslims and Hindus. In fact, much of similar opinions idealized the roles which women held, that of mother, sister and wife and so on; but to all those writers, woman in other than these roles were not very highly regarded, they remained apprehensive of them.

While summing up, we notice his work is definitely a glorification of the bygone age but with this he has also justified his writing. Abbas Khan has proved true to his work which gives us immense idea as how the Afghan age in India had unfolded. The centuries old Islamic *isnad* (اسناد) tradition which had moulded Islamic historiography was at the back of this insistence of truth, the tradition was continued with the instrument he applied while writing this work.

Structure of Abbas Khan's value system on which his work is founded appears very similar to the framework of Sikandar bin Manjhu, who at about the same time, wrote his *vade mecum*, the *Mirat-ī-Sikandarī*, which, like Abbas Khan's work, became the official history of the Lodis (Imamuddin 1964). Abbas Khan Sarwani has by now assumed the status of an "official" historian of Sher Shah Suri (Misra 1977: 231-38).

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Economic Condition of Medieval Bengal as Reflected in Persian Sources

Abdul Motleb Shaikh

A RICH store of historical literature composed mostly in the Persian is one of the legacies of Muslim rule in India. In this regard for more than three centuries the Muslim power expanded throughout the nook and corner of Bengal. Although the political history of Bengal offers several landmarks, its economic history is only casually referred to rather touched upon a few aspects. Therefore, I make a humble attempt in this paper which deals entirely with the aspects of medieval Bengal's economic condition, in the light of Persian sources as substantiated by the travellers' accounts and numismatic evidences. Great port towns of Satgāon, Sunārgāon and Chittagong played an important role in maintaining the economic as well as cultural link between Bengal and the distant parts of the world by immensely facilitating Bengal's sea-borne trade. During this period these ports were the hub of maritime trade with China, Sumatra, Maldives, Sri Lanka, the Middle East and East Africa. It was notable that these traders had mainly traded in pearls, silk, muslin, rice, bullion and horses. Hence an outline of the trade, industry, manufacturing and agricultural produce during the Muslim rule in Bengal is to be examined.

Agricultural Products

Bengal produced various kinds of crops in sufficient quantity. The soil produced in abundance two or three crops every year. The production of some farm products was so plentiful that, after meeting the demand at home, a huge surplus was left for export. The main agricultural product was paddy which was produced thrice a year, as is mentioned in the Chinese sources as well as in *Āin-ī-Akbarī* (Fazl 1978, vol. III: 134).

There were three methods of sowing paddy like broadcasting, drilling and transplantation from the seabed; the last one was popular and convenient to the farmers (Majumdar 1971, vol. I: 650). Abul Fazl says:

The principal cultivation is rice of which there are numerous kinds. If a single grain of each kind were collected, they would fill a large vase. It is sown and reaped three times a year in the same piece of land with little injury to the crop.

– Fazl 1978, vol. II: 136

Rice was thus produced in huge quantity which after feeding the people of the province was exported in large quantity to various parts of India and abroad. Apart from paddy, during the Mughal period, cotton, millet, pulses, lentils, sugar cane, sesamum (sesame), ghee, butter, honey, garlic, ginger, the oil of zerbeline, mustard, long pepper and betel-nuts, etc. were also produced. Different varieties of fruits were also produced. Reference may be made to banana, jackfruit, pomegranate, coconut, mango, melons, lemons, etc. (Dasgupta 1914: 106-10, 115). This shows that Bengal produced various types of agricultural commodities in large scale of which the surplus must have been carried to local markets and from there to other areas deficient in such commodities.

As regards the agricultural produce, the staple crop was paddy (*kishtkār-ī-shali*) (Fazl 1978, vol. II: 48-49) which was cultivated three times a year and there were such bumper harvests that revenue was assessed by an average estimate of the produce, instead of measurements. The other produce in universal demand was betel leaf which was used in the royal courts (Barani 1862: 589) as well as by the aboriginals in their wooded habitations. Sugar too was manufactured out of sugar cane that grew here in abundance. As regards fruits, mango was first in the list, “being preferred by Babur” to all other “fruits except muskmelons” (Babur 1973: 503), but there were worms as “large as the gad-fly” in Bengal varieties of it; this evil being popularly ascribed to the curse of Nur Qutb ul’Alam on the headman of a village. The Barbakābād (Rājshāhī) banana is mentioned as another delicious fruit by Abdul Latif. Babur also refers to the sweetness of its Hindustān variety (ibid. 505). The *martabān* variety, however, excelled every other of its kind grown in this province and Prince Aurangzeb was so fond of it that during Shah Jahan’s stay in Bengal (1625) he secretly ate up some of them kept in the cupboard for being presented to Mirza Nathan (Nathan 1936, vol. II: 780). There were

other fruits, e.g. the jackfruit which grew 200 to 300 in a single tree, and were “as large as pitcher”, and orange which, according to Abdul Latif, was sweeter than *nāraṅgī* and tasted by Emperor Jahangir at the time of drinking “Rām-Raṅgī”. Fishes were abundant in the rivers and formed a principal item in the diet of the people (Fazl 1978, vol. II: 48). Babur delighted in watching them in the rivers of Upper India and remarked about the “savoury” quality of the “Hindustan fishes” Shoals of them are mentioned by Mirza Nathan to have sprung into his pinnacle in the review of the flotilla at Shāhazādpur in Pabna district (Nathan 1936, vol. I: 53).

Non-Agricultural Products

In the pre-industrial economy, Bengal was not only self-sufficient in agricultural produce but it was rich in non-agricultural products which were manufactured essentially to meet the local needs. However, some items were produced in surplus and were exported. Contemporary literature, Persian and Bengali as well as the accounts of foreign travellers throw light on the subject and help us to form an idea that non-agricultural products were of fine quality and were in great demand in other parts of India and abroad. The prominent products during the period under review are described below.

TEXTILES

Bengal had along tradition of textile or cloth manufacturing since ancient times. The Persian chroniclers and foreign travellers were loud in praise of the quality as well as quantity of the cloths produced there. Sulaiman, the Arab merchant of the ninth century, endorsed the extremely fine quality fabric of Bengal (Elliot and Dowson, 1867, vol. I: 361). His views have been supported by the travellers of later times. The sultāns kept the wheels of textile manufacturing moving. During the Sultanate period, Bengal, along with Coromandel and Gujarat, was one of the three major textile-producing regions. The main centres of textile production were located in Sonārgāon, Satgāon, Barbakābād and Ghorāghāt. Sonārgāon was widely famous for its fine muslin. The great Persian poet Amir Khusrau has left an interesting reference to the muslin in his poetic work of *Qiran-us-Sa'dain*. He says: “It was so fine and light that a hundred yards of this muslin could be wrapped up round the head and one could still see the hair underneath.” At another place he

says: “The fine fabric of Bengal was so soft that one could fold a whole piece of this cloth inside one’s nail” (Khusrau 1983: 32-33, 100-101). Ibn Battuta also praised the fineness and cheapness of muslin. Says he: “A piece of fine cotton of excellent quality, and measuring thirty cubits, was sold in my presence for two *dīnārs*” (Battuta 1953: 235). Of the five varieties of cloth which Muhammad bin Tughluq sent along with other presents to China, four may be identified with the muslins produced in Bengal, viz. *bayrāmi* (*bhayrām* or *bhayrom*), *salahiyyā* (or *silāhah*), *shirinbaf* and *shanbaf* (Battuta 1953: 235). Ludovico Di Varthema was a Portuguese Traveller, who had visited Bengal in the first decade of the sixteenth century, Varthema mentions varieties of fabric such as *mamunā*, *duguzā*, *chautar*, *topan* and *sanabafos* (Winter et al. 1963, vol. II: 212). The Portuguese traveller Duarte Barbosa noticed in 1514 CE different kinds of cotton cloths which were almost similar to those referred to earlier by Varthema. Praising the textiles of Bengal he says:

In it are woven many white sorts for sale in various countries. They are very precious, along some of which they call *estravantes*, a certain sort, very thin kind of cloth much esteemed among us for ladies’ headdress and by the Moors, Arabs and Persians for turbans. Of these great store is woven so much so that many ships take cargoes thereof for abroad, others they make called *memonās*, others *duguazās*, others *chautars*, others *sinabafes*, which latter two are the best of all, and the Moors held them the best for shirts. All these sorts of cloth are in pieces, each one whereof contains about three and twenty or four and twenty Portuguese yards. Here they are sold good cheap, they are spun on wheels by men and woven by them.

– Ibid.: 145-46

M. Caesar Fredricke and Ralph Fitch also have respectively referred to the manufacture and trade of cloths. Ralph Fitch visited the city of Sonārgāon where he found “the best and finest cloth made of cotton”.¹ Abul Fazl has also given a reference to the fabrics of Bengal. He says: “The *sarkār* of Barbakābād produces a fine cloth called *gāngājala* (Ganges water).” He further says: “The *sarkār* of Sonārgāon produces a species of muslin very fine and in great quantity” (Fazl 1978, vol. II: 136).

¹ Ryley, J. Horton, 1899, *Ralph Fitch, England’s Pioneer to India and Burma: His Companions and Contemporaries*, pp. 114, 164; also see, Hakluyt, Richard 1962, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, vol. III, pp. 237, 260 and 298.

Another variety of fabric was made of jute. The contemporary Bengali literature reveals that clothes like *patneta* and *pater pachra* were made of jute (Sen, *Kritivas Ramayana*², ‘Introduction’:3). Abul Fazl also referred to the production of jute (sack cloth) particularly in the *sarkār* of Ghorāghāt (Fazl 1978). Weaving was done by a group or caste of people who were known as *jolhā*.

METALLIC WORKS

Other prominent occupations were those which were based on metal works. They were of two types – blacksmith and goldsmith. Both had very old tradition and reputation. The blacksmiths manufactured a number of articles, for instance, weapons (such as swords, lances, coats of mail, hauberks, helmets, etc.), utensils, agricultural implements and many other articles which were made of iron, copper and brass. The Chinese traveller Ma Huan mentions basins, cups, steelguns (*sic*), knives, scissors, bows, arrows, swords, daggers and iron chains (Phillips 1896: 523; Dames 1989, vol. II: 532). Babur mentions that the Bengalis had a reputation for *ātisabājī*. Iron was obtained most probably (Babur 1973: 505) from the local mines. Abul Fazl says that iron-miners were located in the *sarkār* of Bazuhā (Fazl 1978, vol. II: 136).

The goldsmiths of Bengal were also famous as the manufacturer of various kinds of utensils, jewellery and ornaments of gold and silver, which was much in demand at local markets and foreign markets. In local markets, especially these items were much demanded in the noble classes of people and royal houses. The Chinese diplomat Hou Xian, who had come to Bengal in 1415 CE, mentioned that he and his companion emissaries had received in gift basins, girdles, flagons and bows made of gold and silver. Further mentioning to the gold and silver ornaments used by women of Bengal he states, “The ornaments in use were usually earrings of precious stones set in gold, pendants for the neck, bracelets for the wrists and ankles, and rings for the fingers and the toes.” (Bagchi, 1945: 113, 122, 124, 132) foreign accounts and Bengali literature give a vivid description of women wearing gold ornaments of a fairly wide variety. (Barbosa, 1921: 146).

² Quoted by Rahim, A., 1963, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal (1201-1576 CE)*, vol. I, Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, p. 45.

SHIPBUILDING

Abundant in rivers and linked with the Bay of Bengal, Bengal had a tradition of shipbuilding since ancient times. During the early Muslim rule, particularly in the fourteenth century, shipbuilding appears to have developed considerably. Bengal had no dearth of forests which furnished wood for the manufacture of ships. Abul Fazal says that “extensive forests” in the *sarkār* of Bazuhā provided long and thick timbers of which masts (ibid.) were made. During the pre-Mughal times, Bengal ships were an important means of communication and transport. Ships were used also in carrying all kinds of trade, foreign as well as indigenous. Ibn Battuta, who came to Bengal and went from there to Sumatra in a big ship, mentions:

There are innumerable vessels on its rivers, and each vessel carries a drum, when vessels meet, each of them beats a drum and they salute one another.
– Battuta 1992: 271

The Bengal sultāns had developed warships too. The first reference to warships is found to the time of Ghiyas-ud-din Iwaz who first built a flotilla or war-boats and used them against the military expedition of the Delhi Sultān Shams-ud-din Iltutmish (Minhaj 1970, vol. I: 592-93). Ships were built for other purposes too. The pilgrims of Bihar and Bengal used to go to Mecca for *hajj* from the Chittagong port. This is revealed from a letter of Maulana Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, a spiritual disciple and successor of the fourteenth-century Sufi of Bihar Hazrat Sharf-ud-din Yahya Maaneri. In the letter no.152 addressed to the Bengal Sultān Ghiyas-ud-din A’zam Shah, the sufi wrote:

Now the (pilgrim) season is approaching. A *farmān* may kindly be issued to the officials (*kārkūns*) of Chatgāon directing them to accommodate in the first ship the band of *darveśa* pilgrims for Mecca who have assembled around me, the poor man. – Askari 1956: 189-90

Other Minor Works

There were a number of other minor works such as paper manufacturing, stone works, leather and wine productions and several other things. The Chinese accounts say: “There are in the country physicians, astrologers, diviners and all kinds of artisans who are skillful in hundreds of crafts” (Bagchi 1945: 124). Works of masonry and stone cutting

were also prominent. The construction of a large number of mosques, congregational mosques, bridges, and other buildings as well as issuing of a large number of inscriptions engraved on several kinds of stone such as black basalt, black flint, sand stone, granite stone, slab of chlorite and brick (Ahmad 1960, vol. IV: 1-255), indicate the existence of a group of architects and stone cutters. An Arabic inscription of the late thirteenth century of Muhammad Tatar Khan records a *mi'mar* or architect named Majid Kabuli who built a sacred tomb in AH 665 (1266-67 CE) of one Sultān Shah (ibid.: 9-10). This shows that architects were welcome in Bengal from outside. The glazed and enamelled bricks of different designs, shapes and colours used in some buildings like Eklakhī Tomb, Lattan Mosque, Firūz Mīnār in Paṇḍuā and Gaur, make us believe that Bengal's architects had learnt to adopt Persian art (Chatterjee 1995: 921-26). Another occupation worth mentioning was of tanning. Shoes, slippers, sandals, scabbards of swords, saddles and bridles all were made of leather of different kinds. The Chinese accounts have references to shoes and slippers made of the skin of sheep and goat. The shoes of rich men and nobles were with golden lace (Bagchi 1945: 117, 122, 124, 131). Barbosa has also referred to the leather shoes and sandals which were very well worked and sewn with silk

Trade and Commerce

Accounts of the foreign travellers as well as the evidences of a large number of extant coins show that with the establishment of the Turkish rule, trade and commerce received a new impulse.

THE INTER-LOCAL TRADE

In Medieval Bengal it was well organized. The retailers were the backbone of local trade. They comprised two categories – (1) shopkeepers, and (2) pavement dealers. The shopkeepers had shops in the main market of towns and villages where they sold their goods piecemeal at competitive rates to the consumers. While discussing the prices and cheapness of commodities, Ibn Battuta has mentioned certain articles which were the items of internal trade. Apart from mentioning rice, sugar and cloth, he has referred to ghee, sesame, oil and rose water. The last three were not exported but were sold locally. Ibn Battuta has also mentioned about the domestic animals like fowls, ram, cow and pigeons which were most likely purchased and sold at local levels (Battuta 1992: 267). These items

Table 3.1: Agricultural Products sold in Medieval Bengal with their Prices

<i>Items</i>	<i>Approximate Weight/Nos</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Silver Value of ṭanka in Kolkata in 2002 (Rs.)</i>
Rice	8 <i>maunds</i>	1 AR <i>ṭanka</i>	110.00
Paddy	28 <i>maunds</i>	1 <i>ṭanka</i>	110.00
Ghee	14 <i>seers</i>	½ <i>ṭanka</i>	55.00
Sugar	14 <i>seers</i>	½ <i>ṭanka</i>	55.00
Sesame oil	14 <i>seers</i>	¼ <i>ṭanka</i>	27.50
Rose water	14 <i>seers</i>	1 <i>ṭanka</i>	110.00
Fat fowls	8 nos	1/8 <i>ṭanka</i>	55.00
Fat ram	1 no.	¼ <i>ṭanka</i>	27.00
Milch cow	1 no.	3 <i>ṭanka</i>	330.00
Pigeons	15 nos	1/8 <i>ṭanka</i>	55.00
Cotton fabrics (finest textiles)	14 yards	2 <i>ṭanka</i>	222.00

were very cheap and were sold at the following price (see Table 3.1) (Sarkar, 1977, vol. II: 101-02).

It may be noted that during the governorship of Shaista Khan (1664-78 CE) for one rupee (silver *ṭanka*) 8 *maunds* rice could be bought (Salim 1975: 288). In the other words the price per *maund* of rice was 2 *annas* only. Rice was sold at the same price in 1345 CE when Ibn Battuta had visited Bengal (Battuta 1992). It means that the price of rice remained stable during the period of over three centuries between 1345 and 1664-88 CE. The Chinese as well as protégés mentioned local trade and commercial commodities.

Overland and Sea Borne Trade

From ancient times Bengal had trade relations with the neighbouring provinces as well as foreign countries, so that when Turkish adventure Bakhtiyar Khalji entered in Gaur in 1204 CE with some of his cavalrymen, people thought that they were Turkish or Arab horse dealers who had come with priced horses for sale (Minhaj 1964: 150-51). This fact is itself an evidence to prove that the horse trade in Bengal was a common

feature. Ranabir Chakravarti, an eminent scholar, has mentioned that the Arab and Turkish merchants generally brought the best variety of war horses from Arabia and Persia which could fetch as high a price as 1,000 to 4,000 *ṭānkas* (Chakravarti 1999: 194, 222). During the Sultanate period horses were imported to Bengal from different countries of the world. There is sufficient evidence to believe that there was a certain species of mountain horses breed somewhere near “Tibetan-Chinese border and these horses were brought from Tibet via Kamrup and Tripura for sale in Bengal and Bihar”. These mountain horses were called *tangan* or *tanghan*. Contemporary historian Minhaj, fairly mentions about the horse trade between Bengal and Trans-Himalayan regions. He describes:

Every day, at daybreak, in the cattle-market of that city (Karbattan) about 1,500 horses were sold, and almost all the *tangan* horses which were being reached to the country of Lakhnauti were brought from that place. The routes by which they come are the passes and this way in that country is well known, for example, from the territory of Kamrud (Kamrup) to thereof Tibet, there are thirty-five mountain passes, by which they brought horses into the territory of Lakhnauti.

– Minhaj 1964: 154

On the basis of Minhaj’s account, Zaki Velidi Togan has observed that *tangan* horses were brought to Bengal by merchants to be sold (1964: 174-78). Perhaps the horses were imported from mountainous regions in either Tibet or Bhutan. On the other hand, Tomé Pires, observation in Bengal between 1512 and 1515 CE remarked that at that time there must have been 100,000 mounted men in the Kingdom of Bengal (Corteseo 1944, vol. I: 89), even though he believed that the king of Delhi was “a much greater lord”. The Persian chronicler Juzjani also mentions that during the thirteenth-century Bengal was a well-known horse trade centre (Digby 1971: 43). Abul Fazl (a court historian of Akbar) has also mentioned that horses were brought from Tibet to be sold as far as Delhi. He has said that “in the confine of Bengal near Koch (Behar), another kind of horse occurs, which rank between the Gut and Turkish horses and were called *tanghan*, they are strong and powerful” (1978, vol. II: 140). Gut horses, according to Abul Fazl were small but strong and they were found in the northern mountainous district of India (ibid.). These *tangan* horses, which were also known as *kohi*, were described by chroniclers like Ziauddin Barani and Amir Khusrau (Khusrau 1983:

101). Barani has mentioned the categories of horses such as *bahri*, *tatari* and *baladasti* too – regions of north-eastern India, Tibet and beyond (1862: 171-72). Horses were in steady demand in Bengal right from the time of the Sultanate in the region. After conquering Bengal, Bakhtiyar Khalji required horses to raise a well-built army for his Tibet campaign. Minhaj has mentioned that Bakhtiyar moved with 10,000 cavalry on his Tibet expedition, but the campaign collapsed, leaving only a few hundred cavalry men (1964: 162-64). May be, Bakhtiyar Khalji's main intention of the Tibet campaign was to control this Tibetan trade in order to ensure a regular and constant supply of horses. Later rulers continued these military expeditions in the region of Kamrup. Since the Brahmaputra trade route ran through Kamrup they may well have considered it wise to establish their political supremacy over this region. Coins and stone inscriptions of some of these rulers have been found from Sylhet, Koch Behar, Nowgong and other districts (Karim 1992: 152). Sultān Sikandar Shah's coins bearing the mint *Mulk-i-Chawlistan 'urfarsah* Kamrup (ibid.). Vigorous riverine shipbuilding tradition is attested not only by the Mughal. A campaigns of the seventeenth century, but also by Ibn Battuta's account of the maritime campaign on the Ganges delta between rival claimants to the sultanate of Bengal at Chittagong (Sudkawan) and Gaur (Lakhnauti) (Battuta 1992: 236).

Based on the above discussion, it may be perceived that Bengal was a rich and prosperous province, and it maintained economic and cultural links with the distant parts of the world by greatly facilitating its sea-borne trade. During the period under discussion, agriculture provided livelihood for the people at large and fed the industries which were primarily agriculture based. Attention to the expansion of agriculture was paid right from the inception of the Turkish rule in the province. Bengal produced various kinds of crops in sufficient quantity, which were so plentiful that after meeting the demand at home, a huge surplus was left for exports. The result of the expansion of agriculture was that in spite of the growth in population over centuries the prices of at least basic food grains remained stable. Ibn Battuta who came to Bengal in 1345 CE witnessed the price of rice per 8 *maund* for one silver *tanka*, and three centuries later during the governorship of Shaista Khan (1664-78 CE) the price of rice was the same. Contemporary Persian sources along with the Bengali as well as the accounts of foreign travellers throw considerable

light on the subject which helps us to form an idea of pre-Mughal Bengal's manufacturing activities and trade and commerce. During this period Bengal was a major textile-producing region. Sonārgāon, Satgāon and Chittagong ports were also major hubs for shipbuilding of divergent scale which had also contributed to the prosperity of Bengal's economy.

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Reconstructing the Past through Malfuzāt Literature

The Case of Fawaid-ul-Fuad

Amit Dey

Introduction

DURING the initial phase of Indian historians engagement with “Medieval India”, too much emphasis was put on conventional sources such as court history. But such endeavours, which were directly or indirectly patronized by the state, largely concentrated on dynastic history, rise and fall of great men or empires. This genre was characterized by silence so far as the everyday lives of the common people were concerned. It often failed to fulfil our desire to reconstruct the sociocultural history of medieval India.¹ Such constraints prompted many dynamic historians to explore new pastures represented by unconventional sources such as *malfuzāt* (table talks) involving the *murshid*. Our humble effort is the outcome of this second trajectory. In our engagement with the medieval past, we have selected one of the most illustrious *malfuzāt*, entitled *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, produced by the highly talented Hasan Sijzi. It revolves round the towering and charismatic image of Nizamuddin Awliya (d.1325 CE) who was venerated even by the great poet Amir Khusrau.

¹ In this context one must consult K.A. Nizami’s *On History and Historians of Medieval India*, chapter 7, which deals with *malfuzāt*. The book was first published in 1983. The introduction is also valuable. Besides, my discussion with Ali Athar, Head of the History Department, Aligarh Muslim University was also very fruitful. Also see *Sufism in India* by Amit Dey (Kolkata: Ratna Prakashan, 1996), chapter 1. One must not forget S.A.A. Rizvi’s *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, repr., New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1986, pp. 3-8 and 11-12.

Our understanding of medieval Indian society is significantly enriched as we browse through the leaves of this *malʿuzāt*.² It informs us that the overpowering quality of love is emphasized by the sufis. A little love was more praiseworthy than the devotion of all men and *jins*.

Speaks about the elevation from human love (*ishq-ī majāzī*) to spiritual love (*ishq-ī haqīqī*).

In Persian poetry, mystical truth is divulged through the metaphor of human love. Frequent references to Shaikh ul Islam Fariduddin who was the mentor of Nizamuddin Awliya. Both loved music and poetry. This fascination acquired a new dimension under the creative compositions of Amir Khusrau, who is celebrated as the doyen of *qawwālī* (originally called *samʿa*). We are also illuminated about the multiple identities of places or the sufi attitude towards the bandits.

We also gather useful information regarding the sufi attitude towards *hadīth* and *sunnah*, for example:

According to *hadīth* (sayings and deeds of the Prophet) in spite of the Prophet's repeated persuasion, his uncle Abu Talib died as a non-believer. Under Muhammad's advice his body was washed and the *kafan* was put in the grave but general Islamic practice was not followed. (This is in tune with the Quran, that force cannot be applied in matters of faith.)

Another intriguing aspect is: One episode confirms that miracle (*karāmah*) can be performed only during extraordinary circumstances. Otherwise that might infuse a sense of pride in the performer.

If a man visits you, offer him some food (*hadīth*). Here, the religion of the visitor is not mentioned.

One *majlis* demonstrates the significance of *wilāyat*, for example. The *wilāyat* (sphere of spiritual influence) of Shaikh Fariduddin Chishti and Bahauddin Zakariyya Suhrawardi was carved out in a reconciliatory

² Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawaidul Fuad* (in Persian, Lucknow, 1885). I found this copy in the Asiatic Society of Bengal. For the non-Persian knowing academics I would recommend Ziul Hasan Faruqi's *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād': Spiritual and Literary Discourses* (in English), New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1996. The introduction is extremely valuable.

manner and the sufis were concerned about road safety along trade routes. Bahauddin was based in Multan famous for Multani merchants.

The present paper aims at exploring many such intriguing dimensions related to medieval Indian socio-religious life.³ Due to space constraint, we would like to escort the readers only through a few *majlis* narrated in the *Fawaid*.

FAWAID-UL-FUAD: THE TEXT AND ITS CONTEXT

Summary of Some Majlis

Fawaid-ul-Fuad is a famous *malfuzāt* (table talk involving the sufi master) written in Persian by a very gifted author Hasan Sijzi. Everything revolves round the *qutb* (pole) and here the pole is *Sultan ul Masāikh* (Lord of all Saints) Nizamuddin Awliya (d. 1325 CE), one of the most illustrious Chishti saints of South Asia.

MAJLIS 14

All *majlis* begins with: “I had the honour of kissing his feet (*qadambosī, zamān̄bosī*).” Later on, when Islamic revivalist movements gathered momentum from eighteenth century onwards, the reformers tried to abolish such un-Islamic habits? They did not prescribe the abolition of Sufism as such but desired to purge Sufism of *shirk* (polytheistic practices) and *bidaʿ* (innovations). The reformers thought that such practices were responsible for the political decline of Islam. Many of them wanted to go back to the Prophetic way and joined the Tariqā-ī-Muhammadiyah movement.⁴

Differentiation of various categories of religious leaders is noteworthy in this *majlis*. It has been argued that the *ulamā* represents reason, the

³ Those who wish to form a comprehensive idea about Medieval Indian society and culture may compare the *Fawaid* with other relevant works in Persian such as Hamid Qalandar’s *Khayrul Majalis* containing discourses by Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi (d. 1356 CE), the illustrious Chishtī saint, Shaikh Abdul Huq Muhaddith Dehlawī’s (a contemporary of Mughal Emperor Jahangir) *Akhbar-ul-Akhiyar*, and Amir Khwurd’s *Siyar-ul-Awliya* (Delhi, 1885).

⁴ Amit Dey, 2006, *The Image of the Prophet in Bengali Muslim Piety; 1850-1947*, Kolkata, 2006, chapters 2 and 3, Kolkata: Readers Service..

darweśa love and the Prophet both. Let us put that in an equation.

Ulamā = reason (*aql*)

Darweśa = Love (*ishq*)

Prophet = Both

The overpowering quality of love has been emphasized in this portion of the text. A little love was more praiseworthy than the devotion of all men and *jins*. Frequent references to Shaikh ul Islam Fariduddin who was the mentor of Nizamuddin Awliya, characterizes this particular *majlis*, which confirms the importance of *murshid* in sufi circles.⁵

Badaun as a centre of scriptural and mystical learning competed with Delhi in a subtle and implicit manner, which is manifested in the text.⁶ A vendor-cum-robber embraced Islam after seeing the blessed face of Jalaluddin Tabrizi and was named Ali by the saint. He brought money for the saint but the latter ensured its distribution among people. This *hekayet* (episode) depicts the charismatic nature of the saint.⁷ Jalaluddin left Badaun for Lakhnauti. This confirms that Jalaluddin was an ambulatory saint who was keen to spread the light of Islam to eastern India.

There were four types of people according to this text:

- i. Outwardly bright, inwardly poor (attached to worldly concerns),
- ii. inwardly bright, outwardly poor (*majdhub*),
- iii. outwardly as well as inwardly of evil disposition, and

⁵ Amit Dey, 2006, op. cit., chapter 4. Sufism inspired folk singers of colonial South Asia also put emphasis on the *guru* or *murshid*.

⁶ Edward Said in his scholarly work *Culture and Imperialism* has argued that in order to contextualize a text or fiction we need to read between lines. By applying hermeneutic method we can realize that a text can convey a subtle message in an implicit manner. Following this model we can argue that the emergence of new learning centres such as Badaun often narrate the processes of identity formations so far as localities are concerned.

⁷ Max Weber, in his scholarly work *The Sociology of Religion*, has argued that saint-like people often have two types of charisma, i.e. hereditary charisma, which the saint inherits by being an integral part of an illustrious family, and acquired charisma, which he acquires through his energy and talent. Charisma enhances the leadership quality of these people.

- iv. Blessed internally as well as externally with spiritual qualities (*mashāikh*).⁸

In this way, *malʿuzāt* literature played a significant role in educating people so that they could differentiate between the good and the evil. Possession of such wisdom is the *sine qua non* for leading a safe and successful life. This genre is a manifestation how *akhlāq* (ethical) literature could be institutionalized for the betterment of mankind. This is one of the many positive roles played by the medieval Indian sufis.

MAJLIS 15

It escorts us from the world of *akhlāq* to the world of *ishq* as it speaks about the elevation from human love (*ishq-ī-majāzī*) to spiritual love (*ishq-ī-haqīqī*).

In Persian poetry, mystical truth is divulged through the metaphor of human love. Ghazali's teacher Imam Al Haramain was told that eating implied togetherness of body and soul. Seen from that angle eating meant engagement in an act of worship and devotion and during that stage it is not possible to say *salām* (address anyone) to anyone.

This *majlis* confirms that the sufis in South Asia played a significant role in popularizing the *hadīth*.

MAJLIS 16

There is instruction in this *majlis* against the misuse of the power to perform miracle. This event confirms that miracle (*karāmah*) can be performed only during extraordinary circumstances. Otherwise that might infuse a sense of pride in the performer.⁹

⁸ To avoid monotony or repetition we may not cite Amir Hasan Sijzi's, *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, every time after interpreting each *majlis*. Rather we shall mention the *majlis* by number in the main text.

⁹ Symbols are very important in Sufism. The Mevlevi dervishes wear elongated turbans which resemble the tomb underneath which the sufi saint is buried. Similarly, in order to become a sufi, someone has to be capable of burying his ego.

According to Hadith, a visitor is offered food, irrespective of his religious belief.¹⁰

Shaikh Bahauddin Zakāriyā who established the Suhrāwardī order in India was the disciple of Shihabuddin Suhrāwardī. The former distanced himself from the commoners before whom he did not follow the *hadīth* because they did not know the meaning of *hadīth*. These two saints were not Chishtis but were fond of *sam‘a* or sufi music which confirms the complex and heterogeneous nature of Sufism.¹¹

The *wilāyat* (sphere of spiritual influence) of Shaikh Fariduddin Chishti and Bahauddin Zakāriyā Suhrāwardī were carved out in a reconciliatory manner and the sufis were concerned about road safety along trade routes. Bahauddin was based in Multan famous for Multani merchants.¹²

¹⁰ The munificent *murshids* were primarily concerned with the *umm‘a* (Muslim community). However, the non-Muslims were not necessarily excluded from their philanthropy or generosity. They often thought of a larger humanity. That is why charismatic sufis such as Bābā Farīd is venerated by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs alike. His poems are enshrined in the Sikh Holy Book.

¹¹ Chishtīs were fond of *sam‘a* (sufi music). This can also be interpreted as a symbolic challenge to hegemonic orthodoxy because orthodox elements are often critical about music. Suhrāwardī and Naqshbandī sufis were generally opposed to *sam‘a*, however, there could be exceptions.

¹² A religion or religious movement becomes popular or successful when it can prove its relevance in the local community. The Suhrāwardīs had to ensure the safety of the Multani merchants in that region. This particular demand in a particular geographical zone apparently moulded the Suhrāwardī philosophy as well. That is why the Suhrāwardīs were not opposed to receiving wealth and argued that wealth could be used to carry out philanthropic activities and spread Suhrāwardī views. Suhrāwardī shrines in the Multan region could also be unique at times and almost resembled a fort. This fortification was apparently necessary to protect the merchants and other followers in that porous North-Western Frontier. This capability to offer protection was supposed to enhance the charisma of the Suhrāwardī sufis in that region. The photograph of one such fortified shrine of Multan has been printed on the cover of a book entitled *An Introduction to Islam* (Frederick Mathewson Denny, New York: Macmillan, 1985).

MAJLIS 17

Islam encourages cultivation of *sabr* (patience). Public admonition is discouraged because it amounts to disgracing someone.

[*ādāb* = etiquette and *akhlāq* = moral conduct, were taught through Sufi literature]

Historians have carried out painstaking researches to understand the nature of contributions made by the Muslim mystics of South Asia. The advent of the Turko-Afghan adventurers or soldiers in the subcontinent was often characterized by violence. Similar thing happened when the Mongols invaded Central and West Asia. Under identical circumstances the role played by the sufis had a soothing effect in society. They struggled hard to restore the dignity of man in the midst of violence and devastation. In that reconstruction process, the *ādāb* or *akhlāq* literature, which was virtually institutionalized by the sufis, played a significant role.

MAJLIS 18

One had to express one's sincere repentance for all the sins and acts of disobedience committed. As for the *tawbāh* (repentance) of the future: "it meant that one should make a vow that one would never again commit the sins as done in the past".

Akhlāq literature was very important. Ethical training was imparted by *malfuzāt* as well. This genre is replete with instructions, such as: "If you borrow something from someone remember to return it to the owner."

MAJLIS 19

*Though vicious, you are virtuous,
if you do not indulge in finding faults.
And though bad, you are good
if you do not speak ill of others.*

There is no *virtue* and courage in keeping oneself away from people, retiring to an isolated place and contemplating God; virtue, excellence and courage lay in one's remaining absorbed in the contemplation of God even in the midst of people. In this context one sufi saint decided to stay permanently at Ghiyāspur.¹³

¹³ This spirit is resonated in the compositions of Rabindranath Tagore who was deeply impressed by the sufis and instructed Kshitimohon Sen to carry
→

MAJLIS 20

Surah-i-Ikhlās (purity of faith) should be recited thrice after completing the recitation of the Quran to rectify the errors that might have occurred during the Quran recital. The Prophet's advice to recite Surah-i-Fatiha after completing the recitation of the entire Quran implied that the best person continues the recitation of the Quran immediately after having completed it. (Someone who continues his journey.) Muhammad called such a person *al-murtahil*.

Funeral prayer in absentia was held lawful by Imam Shafi. Even if only a limb of the dead, e.g. a hand, a leg or a finger was there, funeral prayer could be offered over it. Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrezi performed funeral in absentia for the Shaikh-ul-Islam of Delhi.

With reference to Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyār Kākī it has been pointed out that really pious people, even when they slide into the stage of spiritual amazement, never skip their prayer.

*kustagane khanjar taslim ra
har zamane az ghayeb jane digar ast*

At every moment there is a new life from the invisible world for those who are killed by the dagger of total submission to God.

This ecstatic sufi music (sam'a) pushed Kākī into a state of spiritual amazement, but he offered his prayer. The Prophets are immune from sins and *awliya* are the protected ones.

“There is no death for God's friends” observed Kākī. In this manner, charismatic sufis such as Bakhtiyar Kaki was successful in elevating the spiritual status of *murshid* (spiritual guide) in Indian society.¹⁴

← out research on the mystical saints of South Asia. This stance of the sufis enjoys striking similarity with the preachings and teachings of Guru Nānak. For Nānak's teachings see Sunita Puri, 1993, *Advent of Sikh Religion: A Socio-Political Perspective*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal. For a proper understanding of *Majlis 19*, I have relied on Zia-ul Hasan Faruqi's *Fawā'id al-Fu'ad*, op. cit.

¹⁴ Spiritual sword has symbolic significance among the sufis because this sword is relevant for the *Jihād-e-Akbar* or the greater *jihād* implying inner or spiritual struggle. It would be appropriate to mention here that the sufis played a significant role in popularizing *hadīth*. One authentic (*sahih*) *hadīth* →

MAJLIS 21

Subject of conversation was people's esteem and affection for *mashāikh* (saint of saints). Great saints are always mobbed by people who kiss their hands and even feet, or touch their garments. Instead of getting annoyed, the saint should regard it as the grace of God.

Hazrat Abu Bakr was known for his tender-heartedness and so the Prophet once remarked that Abu Bakr was *āsif* (*āsif* was one who was easily moved to tears). So there is an emphasis on the excellence of disposition, affability and humility. It goes without saying that cultivation of such qualities contributed to the enhancement of a sufi's charisma which enabled them to enjoy a large following among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

MAJLIS 22

It (*majlis* 22) is on *tahkīm* = accepting the *pīr*'s authority. Forgiving nature of God is emphasized. The *murshid* (guide) should emulate this nature and forgive the *murīd* for the latter's negligence. Normally the *pīr* (guide) would not ask the *murīd* (disciple) to do something unlawful. But if he suggests something like that it was binding upon the *murīd* to follow his *pīr*'s advice. We are reminded of an anecdote relating to Shaikh Abul Khair. Under his order a handsome young man married an ugly old woman. This anecdote was meant mainly to emphasize the moral of *murīds* submitting to the commands of their *pīrs*.

At the age of 12 Shaikh Farid was learning lexicography. A *qawwāl* came from Multan and narrated how Sk Bahauddin Zakāriyā appreciated sufi music (*sam 'a*) and even provided one missing couplet sung during *sam 'a*. {Thus the mystical truth was divulged and at the same time *sam 'a* was legitimized.} This mystical truth revolves round the notion of *ishq-i-haqīqī* or spiritual love which is superior to *ishq-i-majāzī* (human love).

In Multan, while grinding wheat, maid servants sang the praise of God. Once Shaikh Farid wished to hear *sam 'a* but no *qawwāl* was

← narrates, that the Prophet used to say "The pen of a scholar is superior to the blood of a martyr". Intriguingly, Guru Govind Singh's *Zafarnāmā* (in Persian) also speaks of a double-edged sword, i.e. *pīrī* (spiritual sword) and *mīrī* (political sword). And a person who is capable of brandishing the former is superior to the owner of the latter.

available. But a letter was found in the bag of a sufi where the following quatrain was found which Shaikh Farīd himself recited.

*an aql kuja ke dar kamāl tu rasad
 owan ruh kuja ke dar jalāl tu rasad
 giram ke tu pardāh bar girafti zajamāl
 an didah kuja ke dar jamāl tu rasad*

*Where is that wisdom that could comprehend
 The nature of Your Perfection?
 Where is that blessed soul, that could even think of Your Majesty?
 I accept that you have removed the veil from your beautiful face
 But where is the eye that could see Your Beauty?*

Mystical Truth (ilm-i-bātin) is divulged through the metaphor of Love.

Music and poetry posed a symbolic challenge to hegemonic orthodoxy.

MAJLIS 23

If due to natural calamity people are unable to offer the Id-i-Adha prayer that could be offered the day after or even on the third day, but Id-i-Fitr prayer had to be offered on the very day. It was not allowed the next day.

Friday *namāz* is for the entire week and the *namāz* performed on the day of Id (both Id-i-Adha and Id-i-Fitr) covered the safety and felicity for the whole year. Indeed, the *majlis* could be extremely instructional regarding religious rituals.

MAJLIS 24

Blessing of a saint is sought even when a child was initiated into the normal learning process. Everyday life reflected in *malfuzāt*. Recent historiography is also very much emphatic on this everyday life of the common people. This once again confirms the importance of *malfuzāt* in reconstructing the sociocultural history of medieval South Asia.

MAJLIS 25

Trained hunting dogs chase their prey while the trained hunting panther waits for the prey to come on its way and then it pounces upon it. Like the panther people should seek the world in a limited way if they at all have a desire for it, they should not exert themselves (like dogs) too much in

its pursuit. If the panther is sluggish a dog is brought and beaten in front of the panther to frighten it. People should, also in the same manner, learn from (the plight of) others and be forewarned of the consequences of improper deeds. This comparison between humans and animals is not very common in Islam. But Indian folk traditions are replete with such examples.¹⁵ Does this mark a converging point between Persianate elite tradition (*malfuẓāt*s were written in Persian) and Indian folk tradition? Let that be discussed on another occasion.¹⁶

Concluding Remarks

In our efforts to reconstruct the social history of medieval South Asia we have relied on *malfuẓāt* in general and *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad* in particular. We found our exercise fruitful. At the same time we are aware that to secure optimum result it is necessary to compare *Fawa'id* with other contemporary or near-contemporary Persian sources. Due to space constraint we have excluded related genres such as the *maktubāt* (letters exchanged between sufi saints) and *tazkirā* (biographies of sufi saints). These are important sources on social history. Had they been included within the ambit of our study, a more comprehensive picture of the past could have been provided. But perhaps we could have lost our focus with the inclusion of so many categories. So we had to observe some restraint in our approach. Perhaps while studying the *Fawa'id-ul-Fu'ad* we notice a shift from extraterritoriality to Indianness which is manifested through the comparison between humans and animals or through the legitimization of local towns such as Delhi and Badaun in the hierarchy of scriptural as well as mystical knowledge centres (*markaz*). The silent quest for Indianness, which could be regarded as an integral part of the process of identity formation so far as the Indian Muslims of medieval India were concerned, was also visible in the veneration of India-based sufis such as Fariduddin Ganj-i-Sakkar, Bakhtiyār Kākī or Nizamuddin Awliya himself. Though we are illuminated about the day-to-day lives of

¹⁵ Umesh Sharma, 2005, *Muslim Lokgan Marsiaya* (in Bengali), Kolkata.

¹⁶ Possibilities of such convergences cannot be ruled out as art historian Samir Isha has pointed out during interactions in a seminar on Mughal paintings organized by the Iran Society of Kolkata on 6 May 2017 that many indigenous Mughal painters had exposures to folk art.

the people through this genre, we do not get any idea about the vernacular words or terms used by the common people because these are Persian texts which could at times be interspersed with Arabic quotations. However, there is no denying the fact that the sufis played an important role so far as the vernacularization of knowledge is concerned.¹⁷ It is a well-known fact that Nizamuddin Awliya advised his illustrious disciple poet Amir Khusrau to interact with the people in the local *pūrbī* dialect.

¹⁷ Dey, 2006, *Image of the Prophet*, chapter 1.

Reflection of Muslim Intellectual Life in the Akhbar-ul-Akhyar

A Tazkirā of the Sixteenth Century

Aneesa Iqbal Sabir

Introduction

A CAREFUL study of the mystic literature, *malʿuzāt* and *tazkirās*, projects that the court life did not constitute the totality of social or intellectual activity of the period. The *khānqāhs* of the sufis were also important centres where people of all strata — rich and poor, villagers and townfolk, men and women, Hindus and Muslims — assembled. The value of the *malʿuzāt* and *tazkirās* for an assessment of social and religious milieu cannot be disregarded.

The *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* is a famous *tazkirā* authored by Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi (d. 1642) in 1590 CE. It is the most complete and reliable biography of Indian sufis of the four main orders – Chishtīs, Qādīrīs, Shattarīs and Suhrawārdīs — which flourished between the thirteenth and sixteenth century. It discusses the scholars of the Sultanate period, their subjects of study, their efforts in the teaching and learning process, the books authored by them and their genuine interest in the development of education and learning.

Subjects of Study

The *majalis* of the sufis also played an important role as an instrument through which education was imparted to people. It can be deduced from the activities in the *khānqāhs* of the famous sufis and the proceedings of their *majlis*, people could benefit in the field of education. First, in these *khānqāhs* education was imparted by teaching specific books and most of the books were generally related to *tasawwuf* (mysticism) and *tafsīr*

(exegesis) (Nizami 1974: 43). Second, some sufis, who were amongst the *ulamā* class and were interested in teaching, would spare some time to teach in the *khānqāh* or small rooms (*hujrās*) attached to it, books of such subjects which they were fond of, and the members of the *khānqāh* and the general public took advantage of this. Third, sometimes the Quranic verses and the *Hadīth* were explained regarding the problem under discussion, sometimes the questions of the participants were answered with references to the Quran and the *Hadīth* in the assemblies of great sufis and *mashāikh*. Sometimes minute problems related to some Quranic verse or *Hadīth* were also solved in these *majalis* (Sijzi 1894: 126-27; Makhdumdaza 1983: 51, 60, 105, 120, 125).

In the *majalis* of the sufis incidentally the problems or queries of the books that were taught were solved. Once Shaikh Nizamuddin asked one of his *murīds*, Shaikh Shamsuddin Yahya Awadhi about the books he had studied and in reply he mentioned the *Usul-i-Bazdawi*. The Shaikh asked him several questions and in the end Maulana Shamsuddin put forward the difficulties or problems from this book which he could not comprehend. The Shaikh explained and elucidated in such a manner by which the Maulana was very impressed and his faith in the Shaikh became more firm (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 97). We can infer that during the Sultanate period for the teaching of *tafsīr*, Zamakhshari's *Tafsīr (kashshaf)* was the most popularly used *tafsīr* but in the sufi circles the teachers used another *tafsīr Madārik-ul-Tanzīl* (Abul Barkat Abdullah Bin Ahmad-ul-Nafsi). We also find evidence that they referred to *kashshaf* also.

In the *majalis* of the sufis the most popular *tafsīr* that was taught and studied, and of which we find several evidences is the *Tafsīr Madārik*, authored by Hafizuddin Abdullah bin Ahmad Nafsi (ob.1310 CE). Especially amongst the Chishtī circle this *tafsīr* had a stronghold. We find evidence that this *tafsīr* was taught by the Chishtī *mashāikh*.

این وظیفه عسکری منارک طریقہ سلوک مشائخ ایشان است

This litany of the *Tafsīr-i-Madārik* is the method of the way (*sulūk*) of the saints of this order.

– Dehlavi 1332 AH: 186

Other than the *tafsīr* subjects it was essential to teach *tasawwuf* (mysticism) in the *majlis*. During Sultanate period the *Awarif-ul-Maarif*,

Fusus-ul-Hikam, *Kashful-Mahjub* and *Qut-ul-Qulub* were the famous books of mysticism taught in the sufi *majalis* (Qalandar Hamid 1959: 23, 58, 155, 178, 249; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 163, 195).

Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi writes in one place while describing the circumstances of Shaikh Sirajuddin Uthman:

وبعد از آن پیش مولانا رکن الدین کافیه و مفصل و قدوری و مجمع البحرین تحقیق کرده بعد از نقل شیخ نظام الدین فس، سه سال دیگر تعلیم کرد و بعضی کتب از کتب خانه شیخ که وقف بود و جامها و خلافت نامه که از خدمت شیخ یافته بود با خود برد.

Later he made a deep study of *kāfiyāh*, the *mufassal*, the *qudurī* and the *majma-ul-bahrain* under Maulana Ruknuddin; then for three years, he received higher knowledge from Shaikh Nizamuddin by benefiting from his library which was an endowment. And finally he took with him the robe and *khilāfatnāmā* which he received from the Shaikh.

– Dehlavi 1332 AH: 181

Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya had memorized forty chapters of the *Maqamat-i-Harīrī* (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 55; Mir Khurd 1885: 111). Muhammad bin Tughlaq had memorized the *Hidaya* and according to *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* and *Siyar-ul-Awliya* amongst the contemporary scholars of his reign, Maulana Husamuddin Multani also remembered the *Hidaya* completely (Al-Umari 1943: 38; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 89).

Maulana Burhanuddin Mahmud bin Abdul Khair Balkhi was a renowned scholar of his time. He had no parallel in the fields of syntax, lexicography, jurisprudence, *Hadīth* and rational science (Allama 1966, vol. I: 186). He was well versed in spiritual sciences also (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 46). He had learnt *Mashāriq-ul-Anwar* from its author, Maulana Raziuddin Hasan Saghani, and received instruction in *Hidaya* from Maulana Burhanuddin Marghinani (Sijzi 1894: 238-39; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 45-46).

Maulana Kamaluddin Zahid, also known for his piety and spirituality, had been the teacher of Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya of Delhi. The latter had studied the famous work *Mashāriq-ul-Anwar* under him. Balban held great reverence for him and wanted to appoint him the *imām* (leader of the congregational prayers), but the Maulana declined with the remark, “Our prayer is all that is left to us. Does the sultān want to take that also” (Mir Khurd 1885: 116; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 72). Nizamuddin

received instruction in *Mashāriq-ul-Anwar* from him and committed the whole book to memory (Mir Khurd 1885: 111; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 72). Kamaluddin Zahid's refusal to accept such a good job offer proves his deep interest in religion and preference for a sacred and pious life. His complete devotion and dedication for religion and learning are testified by this act.

Shaikh Burhanuddin Mahmud was a contemporary of Balban and belonged to the second half of the thirteenth century. He was a senior *ālim* who studied the *Mashāriq-ul-Anwar* from its author. Shaikh Burhanuddin Mahmud used to say that when he was six or seven years old he was going somewhere along with his father, he came across Burhanuddin Marghinani author of *Hidaya* and greeted him respectfully, the Shaikh stared at him and blessed him saying that Allah is making him say that one day this boy will become a great scholar that seekers of knowledge will come at his door to acquire learning (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 47).

Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya (1244–1325 CE) was the *khalifā* of Shaikh Farīd and his name was Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Bukhārī and he was entitled Sultān-ul-Mashāikh (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 54). Since he was an expert of *mantiq*, he came to be called “Nizamuddin Mantaqi” by other students. Then he went to Pakpattan and met Shaikh Farid, then he was only twenty, he studied six parts of the Quran, six chapters of *Awarif* and *Tamhidat* of Abu Shakoor Salimi.¹ He went to Delhi from Badaun and studied *Maqāmāt-ī-Harīrī* and *Hadīth* from Shamsul Mulk (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 78).

We can infer the selection of books played an important role in the acquisition of knowledge. Generally it is known that during that period for the purpose of teaching and learning instead of fixing debates and discussion on the prevalent subjects of study, books related to them were selected for study. This selection of books in fact was in accordance with the personal leanings of the *ulamā*, *fuzala* and teachers of that period and depended upon their approval. That is the reason in the selection of books we find differences based on time and place. Moreover in some circles of scholars and teachers many books were prescribed for one particular

¹ Dehlavi 1332 AH: 55, Mir Khurd 1885: 115-16, Sijzi 1894: 75. Teaching a few chapters of the book carefully and then leaving the rest for the independent study of the student was a practice of medieval Muslim scholarship.

subject according to their personal interest and likings.

Efforts of Scholars in Learning and Teaching Process

Maulana Badruddin Ishaq, a resident of Delhi of the thirteenth century, was the *khalifā* of Shaikh Farīd. He acquired his education and scholarship here itself. He desired to gain complete knowledge of all sciences and arts but while studying sciences he came across some doubts and difficulties which even the great *ulamā* of Delhi could not solve. Thus he decided to travel to Bukhara to solve his problems from the *ulamā* there. On his way when he reached Ajodhan (Pakpattan) he saw that Shaikh Farīd's fame had reached far and wide and people from all over used to come to visit him to solve their queries. One of his close friends suggested him to meet Bābā Farīd. When Badruddin Ishaq saw Bābā Farīd he was surprised to see his enlightened preaching and magical sermons and spiritual power by which he won the hearts of people. All the doubts of Badruddin Ishaq were cleared after listening to the discussions and preachings of Bābā Farīd and he gave up the idea of going to Bukhara and became a *murīd* of Shaikh Farīd (Mir Khurd 1885: 179-80). Later he married Bābā Farīd's daughter Bībī Fātimā. The brochure "Asrar-ul-Auliya" (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 67-68) (Mysteries of the Saints) is his compilation in which he collected the *malfuzāt* of Bābā Farīd and also wrote a scholarly work on Arabic Grammar *Tasrīf-ī-Badarī*.² Although historians and *taẓkirā* writers have narrated that sometimes in order to attain scholarship and knowledge in a particular subject, students had to go to specific places and sometimes had to travel to foreign countries also but here we have an example of a scholar who gave up the idea to travel abroad because he was satisfied and found all his answers to his queries from Bābā Farīd.

Maulana Badruddin Nasafi was a famous *dānishmand* of thirteenth century and was not associated to any *silsilāh*. If anybody came to acquire education from him he put three conditions:

- a. First, you will eat only once a day so that there is place for the desire of knowledge.

² However Muhammad Habib and K.A. Nizami do not consider *Asrar-ul-Auliya* among the genuine *malfuzāt* on the ground that it bears wrong dates, mistakes about the names of persons and their period, Habib 1950: 25-28; Nizami 1973: 119-20.

- b. You will not miss classes, if you miss any day, I will not teach the next day.
- c. If you meet me on the street, you will only greet *salām* and involve in no formalities and waste time (Mir Khurd 1885: 536; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 77).

It can be gathered from these rules laid down by Shaikh Badruddin Nasafi for his students that immense amount of discipline was maintained while conducting the process of teaching during the medieval period.

Maulana Usuli's own life had an element of dramatic thrill in it. When he was young he was roaming on the streets of Badaun. He happened to pass by a house where Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi, a distinguished saint, was staying. Shaikh Tabrizi who was sitting in the *dehlīz* (entrance) of the house looked at the wandering youth and saw in him signs of future greatness. He called him in, gifted him the robe that he was himself wearing and this episode completely changed his life. Alauddin took to studies with all the zest of a reformed youth. In course of time he so distinguished himself that he came to be looked upon as the most erudite scholar of Badaun (Sijzi 1894: 165; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 77-78). He looked upon teaching as a cooperative work in which the teacher and the taught both participated (Sijzi 1894: 165). Once when Malik Yar was appointed *imām* of the Jama Masjid of Badaun, some people objected to it as he lacked requisite learning. On hearing about this objection Maulana Alauddin Usuli said that even if the *imāmate* of the Jama Masjid of Baghdad was assigned to him, it would be nothing compared to his capabilities (Sijzi 1894: 166). The Shaikh felt that it was not only formal education but a developed and delicate sensitivity which mattered.

Maulana Husamuddin Multānī, another distinguished *khalifā* of Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya, was well known for his insight in literature of *fiqh* (Muslim jurisprudence). He remembered by heart large parts of *hidāyah*. Besides he was well versed in *Qut-u 'l-Qulub* and *Ihya-ul-'ulum* (Mir Khurd 1885: 266; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 89-90).

Maulana Fakhruddin Zarradi was the *khalifā* of Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya and acquired education from Maulana Fakhruddin Hanswi in Delhi. He became very famous because of his intelligence and eloquence of speech (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 91). Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud writes whatever he and his associates took one or two months to study, he

grasped within an hour. During Muhammad Tughlaq's reign when people emigrated to Deogir, Maulana Zarradi also went there, from there he went to Baghdad and studied books on *Hadīth* in great detail. Then he decided to return to Delhi for which he boarded a ship which sank and he died in this accident (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 91).

Specifying this trend of acquiring education Bilgrami writes in his *Ma'asir-u'l-Kiram*.

طلبہ علم خیل خیل از شہری بہ شہری می روند و برجاموافقت دست بہ تحصیل
مشغول می شوند

Seekers of knowledge went in large number, from city to city and every where they engaged themselves in receiving learning according to their choice.

– Bilgrami 1910: 221-22

Syed Jalaluddin (ob. 1291 CE) was the *khalifā* of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakāriyā. Having received his early education at Uchch under the guidance of Shaikh Jamal Khandan Ru and Shaikh Bahauddin, the *qāzī* of Uchch. He then went to Multan to join the seminary in the shrine of Bahauddin Zakāriyā where he stayed for a year and studied *Hidaya* and *Bazdawi* under the guidance of Shaikh Musa and Maulana Majiduddin, both of them, the renowned scholars and famous teachers of this seminary. From there he went to Mecca and Medina and benefited from the scholarly and spiritual excellence of Shaikh Abdullah Yafai and Shaikh Abdullah Mutri (see Qdiri 1975: 65-70).

There are also instances of studying all subjects under one particular teacher. Makhdum-i-Jahanian Syed Jalaluddin Bukhārī of Uchch, from his initial to the last stage of education, studied all the books of the curriculum from Qazi Bahauddin Uchchi. But in the field of mysticism Afifuddin Abdullah Mutri was his teacher (Allama 1966, vol. II: 18). Perhaps one more reason for this kind of private teaching was that teaching was considered as means for the service to religion and to popularize learning and education. Thus generally in the circles of the *ulamā* there persisted deep interest in the process of teaching and learning. Amongst them those who were well-off and financially stable would willingly and satisfactorily conduct this service to mankind and religion successfully. Second, there were also such *ulamā* who other than teaching

were involved in other occupations but in spite of this; they would spare time to fulfil their duty of spreading knowledge. Third, there were such *ulamā* who were patronized by the sultāns and nobles and in exchange for their service were paid cash or given land in the form of gifts.³ We find thousands of *ulamā* mentioned in the contemporary sources who spent almost their whole life to spread knowledge or most of their time was occupied in this activity. Infinite seekers of knowledge gained from them. Moreover several such teachers taught for more than half a century (Bilgrami 1910: 142). Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlawi says about *Makhdum-i-Jahanian*:

He travelled widely and received blessings and benedictions from saints (*siyahat bisyar kard wa bisyari az auliya ne 'mat wa barkat yafti*).

– Dehlavi 1332 AH: 142

On account of his visits and journeys he came to be known as *jahān gasht* (world traveller).

Mir Khurd writes that Nizamuddin Awliya after completing *Ilm Fiqh, Usul-i-Fiqh* started with the books of the stage of *fazl* (Mir Khurd 1885: 100-101) which testifies that there was a stage of *fazl*. In the different books of that period and the *tazkirās* of the *ulamā* and sufis we find the usage of the term *ilm fazl* (ibid.: 111). In other books another word used for *fazl* is *muntahiyana* (Badayuni 1868: 324) and this is the stage which is interpreted as the stage of higher learning. Of the stage prior to this stage we do not find specific information in the books but in view of the term *fazl* modern scholars have given the name *ilm zaroorī* (Compulsory Education) to the previous stage because whatever was studied before *ilm fazl* is presumed to be a compulsory stage of education and who completed this stage was called a *dānishmand* (scholar) (Mir Khurd 1885: 298; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 80-81, 98-99, 144, 150). That means any individual who did not go through this stage could not be called a *dānishmand*⁴ or *maulvī*.

³ During the medieval period the terms used for cash payments were *vezīfā* or *inām* and for the grant of land *madad-i-ma'ash* was used. For details see: Fazl 2005: 946.

⁴ For details see Mir Khurd, 1302 AH (1885 CE), *Siyar ul Auliya*, Delhi: Matba Muhibb-i-Hind, p. 298.

Libraries were a part of the royal expeditions. The Delhi sultāns always carried important books in the form of small libraries in their war expeditions. Other than the sultāns and nobles the scholars also possessed private libraries and had their private collection of books (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 87, 250; Bilgrami 1910: 265). During that period there were also such scholars who while copying particular books of different arts and sciences would also write the keys and marginal notes so that while studying or reading, the scholar would not have to face the difficulty of separately referring to the key or commentary of a particular work (Bilgrami 1910: 48, 225, 229). Some scholars were so fast in writing books that they would copy hundreds of pages just within two or three days (Bilgrami 1910: 43; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 250). Other than this there was also a group or section that came into existence for making copies ready which adopted this work as a full-time profession, they were called *warraq* and *nassakh*. They would keep investigating and have kept information on the important books, as to where and which place they were available and in whose possession, so that they could make copies ready for the scholars when the need arose. On their own also these professional copyists would copy important and popular books in demand and would keep selling them (Sijzi 1894: 45; Gilani 1987: 51-54). Other than the general *warraq* and *nassakh* there were also several expert copyists and calligraphists during that period.

It is obvious that a display of their talents would come forward in the form of compilations and writings of books which specially would be installed in the Royal Libraries. These libraries which were an important part of the educational activities of the administration also served as institutes for the spread of knowledge (Rafiq n.d.: 25, 34). During the same period Delhi's famous Sufi Nizamuddin Awliya had a huge library in his *khānqāh*. His *khānqāh* was in the town called Ghiyaspur in old Delhi and all scholars and seekers of knowledge benefited from it.

Books Authored by Scholars

Maulana Ziauddin Bakhshi of Badayun, a famous scholar, was Maulana Shihabuddin's pupil (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 106). Though he passed his life in seclusion, he left several works as his memorial, some of them are still intact. One of his works *Gulrez* has been published by the Royal Asiatic Society. Another famous work is the *Silk-us-Suluk*. Its Urdu translation

has been published from Lahore with the title *Allāh Wāloñ kī Qawmī Dukān* and original Persian too has been printed. With regard to *Silk-us-Suluk*, Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi writes:

سلک السلوک او بغایت کتاب شیرین و رنگین است. بزبان لطیف و موثر مشتملبر حکایات مشائخ و کلمات ایشان و اکثر تصنیفات وی مملوست به قطعہ ہ کہ ہمہ بہ یک طریق و یک نہج واقعہ اند. چنانکہ قطعہ

بخشی! خیز ویا زمانہ بہ ساز
ورنہ خود را نشانہ ساختن است
عاقلان زمانہ می گویند
عاقلی با زمانہ ساختن است

His *Silk-us-Suluk* is very sweet and colourful in subtle, delicate and effective language. It consists of the stories of *mashāikh* (sufis) and their sayings. Most of his works are full of stanzas which are all equal in pattern and style. Accordingly the *qitāh* (stanza):

*Rise, Oh Bakhshi! and do in accordance with the time;
Otherwise you yourself will be your target;
Wisemen of the time do say;
Wisdom is to mix with the time.* – Dehlavi 1332 AH: 105

More popular than his *Silk-us-Suluk* is his *Tūtī Nāmāh* (ibid.) which contains the fifty stories told by a parrot which have been translated into German, English and Deccani. The Urdu prose book *Totā-Kahānī*, which was compiled by Syed Haider Bakhsh Haidarī on the request of Gil Graist, the principal of the Fort William College, is the translation of the *Tūtī Nāmāh*. Maulana Ziauddin Bakhshi was a poet also. He was a pupil of the famous poet Shihabuddin Mehmara of Badayun in the art of poetry. He died in 1350 CE.

Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri (ob. AH 641) was entitled Muhammad bin A'ta and became famous as one of the great *mashāikh* of Hindustān. He knew the external sciences (*ulum-i-zāhīrī*) and the internal sciences (*ulum-i-bātinī*) very well. He was extremely fond of *sam'a* and was an active participant of the *sam'a* gatherings. Due to his liking for *sam'a* the *ulamā* of the period presented a *mahzar* against him to the sultān in reign. He had complete knowledge of the *shariā* (law of Islam) and *tariqāt* (spiritual path) (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 37). He was a *murīd* (disciple) of Shaikh Shahabuddin Suhrāwardī but having reached Delhi he had

become faithful to Khwājā Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kākī and is buried in the feet of the latter's grave. He was very fond of *sam'ā* (mystical songs) and during the reign of Shamsuddin Iltutmish had obtained the letter of permission to hear it, in spite of the opposition of *ulamā*. He wrote several books of these *Tawali'-ul-Shumus* (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 37) is very famous. He authored the *Lawaih* (Sijzi 1332 AH: 128) and many other treatises. Nizamuddin Awliya once said to his students after going through the works of Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri:

Every thing of what you have yet to study is also herein. And further I confess that what I have studied and what I have not studied I find all of that in these pages. – Ibid.: 241

Viewing this statement of Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya it can be surmised that Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri was a scholar of high stature and his knowledge was par excellence.

Mir Khurd informs us that Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya studied *hidaya*, *bazdawi*, *kashshaf*, *mashāriq* and *masābih* from Maulana Jamaluddin (ibid.: 207). Probably these were the subjects taught in the *ilm fazl* stage. The *Tafsīr Kashshaf* (ibid.: 317) and the *Tafsīr Madārik* (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 186) *Mashāriq-ul-Anwar*, *Masābih* were commonly used books on religious sciences.

Among the sufi writers, Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi Nagauri Sawālī, a *khalifā* of Khwājā Muinuddin Ajmeri and whose letters are very famous, is perhaps the first example in the art of letter writing (*fan-i-insha*). He wrote other works also; one of them is *Usul-i-Tariqah*. Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi in his *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* (p. 31) has highly appreciated this work. His Malfuzat *Suroor-us-Sudur*⁵ are also available.

In connection to *ulamā* and *mashāikh*, it is necessary to mention here Khwājā Ziauddin Sunami who was the author of the *Nisab-ul-Ihtisab*,⁶

⁵ For details see Nizami, K.A., 1960, *Studies on Medieval History and Culture*, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, pp. 97-101.

⁶ *Nisab-ul-Ihtisab*, written by Ziauddin Umar Ibn Muhammad al-Sunami commonly known as Ziauddin Barani is an Arabic treatise related to *misbāh* (censure of public morality), the well-known institution of Islamic state. For biographical notices of the author see: Dehlavi 1332 AH: 109; Ali 1914: 97-98; Bhatti 1974: 254-56.

and very strictly followed the *shariā*. Although he was reprehensive to Shaikh Nizamuddin Awliya on account of his practice of hearing *sam‘a* (mystical songs) the latter however held great regard for him.

Sultān Muhammad bin Tughlaq had disrespected Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi but Firoz Shah paid him great honour. It was the Shaikh who, after the death of Muhammad bin Tughlaq persuaded Firoz Shah, who was intending to leave for *hajj* and other pilgrimages, to become the Sultān of Delhi. Firoz, on becoming the sultān, sought his advice on several occasions. Shaikh Sadruddin Multānī was another famous *shaikh* (sufi) of that time whom the sultān had granted the title of Shaikh-ul-Islam. It appears that poetry and the compositions of verses were not popular in Firoz’s reign as compared to others. However, some famous poets of the time are found mentioned in the sources, one of them being Masud Bak, who is said to be a relative of Firoz Shah. His *dīwān*, the collection of his verses and poems, has been published from Hyderabad, Deccan. His real name was Sher Khan. Perhaps Masud Bak was his title. For a long time he lived the life of aristocracy. Later he felt attracted to the *darveshī* (the mystical life) and joined the discipline (became a *murīd* – disciple) of Shaikh Ruknuddin bin Shaikh Shihabuddin. He wrote several works on Sufism (*tasawwuf*), as for example the *Tamhidat* and the *Mirat-ul-Arifin*. Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlavi writes about him:

در سلسله چشتیه بیچ کس این چنین اسرار حقیقت را فاش نگفتہ، زمستی نہ کردہ کہ او کردہ

In the Chishtī order nobody disclosed the secrets of reality and drank
with the love of God as he did. – Dehlavi 1332 AH: 169

Khwājā Azizuddin, grandson of Shaikh Farīd, was a pupil of Muhiuddin Kashan (Qalandar Hamid 1959: 150-51, 202-03), eminent disciple and *khalifā* of Nizamuddin Awliya. He was an excellent calligraphist (Mir Khurd 1885: 202; Dehlavi 1332 AH: 95) and recorded the conversation of Nizamuddin Awliya under the title: *Tuhfat-u’l-Abrar-fi-Karmat-u’l-Akhyar*.⁷ He was known for his piety and scholarship.

Maulana Muinuddin ‘Imrani was a profound scholar of the thirteenth century and was deeply respected in the academic circles. Shaikh Abdul

⁷ This *mal‘uz* is extinct now.

Haqq calls him an outstanding scholar and teacher of the city. He wrote commentaries on *Kanz*, *Husami*, *Miftah-ul-ulum*, *al-Manar*, etc. His insight in *fiqh* literature was unrivalled. Maulana Khwājā learnt at his feet, Muhammad bin Tughlaq sent him to Shiraz to invite Qazi Azd to India and request him to dedicate his *Matan Muwafiq* to him but when Qazi Azd met Maulana Muinuddin 'Imarani, he refused to come saying, what is the need for me when there are already such great intellectuals in India (Dehlavi 1332 AH: 144). This statement of Qazi Azd testifies that in the medieval period the academic and intellectual stature of India was glorified to a great extent.

Conclusion

Thus the *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* supplies invaluable information not only on the lives of sufis of the medieval period but also on their activities in disseminating their ancestor's teachings and their impact on the contemporary society. Due to their personal effort, hard work, sincerity and dedication, they were successful in creating an atmosphere congenial for learning. They had indepth knowledge of both the sciences: external (*ulum-i-zāhirī*) and internal (*ulum-i-bātinī*).

They were so deeply involved in this process of teaching and learning that the method of in-depth study and research came in vogue. Seminars and discussions were conducted which further enhanced the study of thought-provoking topics. The standard of intelligence had reached such a height that most of these scholars penned down their thoughts and brought about voluminous compilations and compositions which provided further incentive to study. The purpose of these scholars was to either attain spiritual gain or acquire maximum knowledge and not to achieve commercial benefits. Thus this book exhibits the complete sociocultural scenario of the medieval period.

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Medieval Monuments of Qasbā Nāgaur

Study Based on Persian Inscriptions

Jibraeil

THE epigraphic evidence is immense valuable for the study of the medieval monuments of *qasbā* Nāgaur. This study is based on the inscriptions, particularly Persian, available either at the surveyed site or in the museums and related institutions. It is a fact that the archival, non-archival, numismatical inscriptions and archaeological data form the backbone of the historical research on all the periods. Rajasthan is extremely rich in all the mentioned categories of the sources. Many of the medieval scholars worked on Nagaur like: Z.A. Desai (1970), M.H. Chughtai (1940), Dashrath Sharma (1972), B.S. Mathur (1966), Kailash Chand Jain (1959), U.N. Pandey (1973), M.H. Siddiqui (1979), Minakshi Jain, Kulbushan Jain and Meghal Arya (2009). A survey report is also prepared under Archaeological Survey of India by Gairrick and his associates under the supervision of Cunningham (1921-22).

Nagaur has its own history and is considered as a place of great antiquity. It was known by various names such as Nāgapura, Nāgaura, Nāgapattana, Ahipura and Bhujāṅganagara. It is also said that its name was borrowed from its traditional founders, the Nāgas, who was originally ruled over this place. From the seventh century CE (Jain 1972: 242), it was probably governed by the Chauhans and was included in Sapādalakṣa (ibid.: 243). After the defeat of Pṛthvīrāja III in 1192 CE by Muhammad Ghori, Nāgaur passed into the hands of Turkish rulers who governed this place through a number of Turkish governors between 1195 CE and 1270 CE (ibid.: 244). With the Turkish conquest of Nāgaur, the influence of Muslim saints is also noticed. Two famous Muslim saints named Shaikh Hamiduddin and Qazi Hamiduddin resided at Nāgaur in the thirteenth

century CE, and propagated the sayings of Islam.¹ Rāi Bīsala, a feudatory of Pṛthvīrāja III, got attracted towards Islam and finally converted himself to the Muslim faith and consequently built a mosque (Jain 1972: 249-50). Nāgaur was a great centre of many cultural and other structural activities which helped it to make a composed culture. It is known for its composite nature in its art, architecture and other historical monuments. There are a large number of heritage monuments, constructed during the medieval period such as Dargāh of Khwājā Hamiduddin Nāgaurī, Baṛe Pīr kī Dargāh, Shamsī Mosque, Akbarī Mosque and Shahjahānī Mosque.²

Through this study our effort is to provide the information regarding the medieval monuments of *qasba* Nagaur and its significance as reflected in Persian inscriptions.

Dargāh of Khwājā Hamiduddin Nāgaurī Suwālī

The information about the sufi saints and their activities is available in abundance in general in India and Rajasthan in particular. They reached India when sufi movement had entered the last and the most important phase of organization of Sufi *silsilāhs* (Husain 2007: 1). Suhrāwardī sufis worked in Sind and Punjab while Chishtī sufis established their centre at Ajmer, Nāgaur, Nārnaul, Suwāl, Maṅḍal, etc. These sufis identified themselves with the problems of the people of Rajasthan, their worries, their hopes and their aspirations. This led to the popularity of Chishtī sufis in Rajasthan. They adopted many customs and traditions of Rajasthan (ibid.). Sufis alienated the whole of Rajasthan into their spiritual territories which were helped in the growth and the development of urban centres of Rajasthan (Mishra 2004: 19; Khan 2004: 93; Jibraeil 2004: 62-75).

Nāgaur had been a well-known centre of sufis. It is said that it has reached at peak during the period of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nāgaurī (Chishtī *silsilā*) and Qazi Hamiduddin Nāgaurī (Suhrāwardī *silsilā*). In history, therefore, two centres, i.e. Ajmer and Nāgaur, are considered as the Kaba of the Chishtiyā *silsilā*.³ According to I.H. Siddiqui, Shaikh Hamiduddin

¹ These shrines have been surveyed by us under a project sanctioned by Mehrangarh Museum Trust, Jodhpur.

² See Final Report of Project submitted in 2013 which was sanctioned to the author of the book by Mehrangarh Museum Trust, Jodhpur.

³ Pathak, Padmadhar, "Qazi Hamiduddin Nagaurī", in *Nāgaur kā Rājñītik aur Sānskṛtik Vaibhav*, p. 64.

Sufi Nagauri had posted at Nagaur by his *pīr* (religious preceptor) Shaikh Muinuddin Sijzi (Chishtī), where he died in 1276 CE (2004: 3), and his *dargāh*⁴ is situated at Nāgaur (Serial No.1 on Plan).

Outside the Maya gateway on the north of the city is a large enclosure containing several tombs of Mohammedans (Muslims) and in the midst is a beautifully carved lofty gate of stone stands which is known as *Atarkin kā Darwāzā*. It was surveyed under the supervision of Cunningham and he said that though tradition assigns its construction to these Mohammedan saints (Muslim saints), of whose antecedents, he has endeavoured to give an epitome in the early part of this account. He found on the summit of this gateway and right behind the uppermost *Mimber* of the building, where it was quite hidden from view, a Persian inscription of the Emperor Mohammad, son of Tughlak Shah, which is dated in 630 AH/1230 CE.⁵ Following attempt is made to understand the impression of the date:

1. Garrick (Under the supervision of Cunningham) – 630 AH/1230 CE.⁶
2. Z.A. Desai (1971: 118) (Surveyed and personally read the inscription) as follows:

Place : *Dargāh* of Sufi Sahib (also called Tarikin). In the back wall of the second floor of the Buland Darwāzā.

⁴ In Indo-Persian literature, the term *dargāh* is used both for the royal court and the tomb of a pious man. Cf. Barani 1862: 494 and 499. In Urdu *dargāh* means only the tomb of a Muslim saint (this information is quoted by Siddiqui, 2004: 1).

⁵ This Atarkin is a very popular saint and venerated by Hindus and Musalmans alike: the former are often seen in great excitement near the tomb of Atarkin which is guarded by this grand gateway. Khwājā Sufi Mohammad Ayyub Tariq Chishti Farooqui has written in details about this gate which has now been translated into Hindi as a separate chapter on “Atarkin kā Darwāzā (Buland Darwāzā)”, by Pīr Sufi Haji Abdur-Ruaab Chishti under the title of *Nāgaur Ke Sūfi Saīton Kā Itihās*, Jodhpur: Mehrangarh; Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash, in 2009 (second part), pp. 116-22.

⁶ Gairrick, H.B.W. under General A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India-Report 1883-84*, vol. XXIII, pp. 69-70.

Date : 733 AH, Shawwal (middle) = 1333 CE, June (month)
 Dynasty : Tughlaq.
 King : Mohammad bin Tughlaq Shah.
 Contents : Records the construction of the tomb.
 Source : *EIAPS*, 1967: 19 pl. IVb; *ARIE*, 1961-62, No. D. 245; *ASIR*, XXIII: 64, 69; Hor. List No. 1048.

3. Khwaja Sufi Mohammad Ayyub Tariq Chishti Farooqui (2009: 115) (Translation Peer Sufi Haji Abdur Ruaab Chishti) – 15 Shaban, 733 Hijri (1 May 1333 CE).
4. M.H. Siddiqui (2001: 267) – Shawwal Month (Middle), 733 Hijri (June 1333 CE).

It is astonishing to note that the dates and years of the constructed gate are different from each other's while all the surveyors and scholars have been explored and read the same inscription, attached on a side of the gate. We are able to understand the year of 1333 CE (fourteenth century) which is being mentioned by at least three scholars, i.e. Z.A. Desai, Khwaja Sufi Mohammad Ayyub Tariq Chishti Farooqui and M.H. Siddiqui; but the year of 630 AH/1230 CE is given by Garrick (survey report under the supervision of Cunningham) is not acceptable in any case because there is about 100 years difference in between. He himself countered from his report that gate was constructed during the reign of Mohammed bin Tughlaq while his given date is prior to 100 years which is absolutely unjustifiable and unacceptable.

This remarkable structure measures 41'10" high to the top of its white marble battlements; but its two minarets are 11'6" above the battlements and therefore 53'4" from the ground.⁷ Entering the building from the south, one could pass right through a garden behind or to the north; but if an ascent to the top of the gateway is desired either of two narrow staircases of 2'1" wide by 5'3" high at entrance leading into the east or west bastions must be selected.⁸ The main opening which leads to the garden where there is a mosque having 7'3" height and 3'7" width as is the case with many Muslim buildings which have disproportionately small

⁷ Gairrick, H.B.W. under General A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India-Report 1883-84*, vol. XXIII, pp. 69-70.

⁸ Ibid.

entrances⁹. There are two gateways in this portion of the building to the north and south ends of a passage leading through it. The walls here are very massive being 4'9" thick measured at the principal entrance and at the postern 3'. There are three flights of steps with three landings to reach the summit of the main building; one of these flights is placed outside the building for want of room inside. A fourth flight conducts one up to the *chatrīs* (pinnacles) which are at the corners of the large projections, or angular bastion-piers of this gateway. There are four storeys to each pinnacle tower supported by four pillars each; so that the towers contain sixteen pillars, each pillar in the first or lower most storey is 6'9" high and 3'8" in girth, those of the second storey 5'10" high and 3'3" in girth, the third 5' and 2'6" and the fourth 5' and 2'6" respectively.¹⁰

Behind the façade and resting on the lower part of the gallery are three domes.¹¹ This part of the building the main roof on which the dome rests is only 33' in height, the centre dome is 12' and the other two side domes are each 6' in height; so that measuring from the ground to the summit of the centre dome the total height is 45" or 3'2" in excess of the moulded façade notwithstanding which the dome is invisible from the front or the south of the gateway owing to the circumscribed space in the courtyard and the exigencies of perspective.¹²

In the body of the building there are two chambers for sentries or pilgrims which are 7'5" long, 7'3" wide and 5'3" high. Excepting a beautiful promenade behind the battlements, seats in the pinnacles and the two chambers above described, there is no accommodation in the gateway building. The walls or piers of this building are very massive indeed and those in the centre are cleverly arranged in four blocks of solid masonry in order to give strength to the main building.¹³

⁹ Gairrick, H.B.W. under General A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India-Report 1883-84*, vol. XXIII, pp. 69-70.

¹⁰ Personally visited this site with the survey team and conducted interviews during a physical survey of the site.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ This arch is noteworthy as one of the first constructed in India. Its faults are obviously the result of inexperience. (It is explained by H.B.W. Gairrick in his report.)

The gateway of Atarkin is undoubtedly magnificently sculptured in every part and the geometrical patterns and other objects moulded thereon are of every imaginable form. I would only call attention to the centrifugal arrangements of the carvings over the main arch as differing from the straight parallelism of other examples.¹⁴ All is in the same light-yellow limestone of which the seven arches of the Ajmer mosque are built, save the battlements at summit which are of white marble.¹⁵ A large ostrich's or bustard's egg hangs suspended by a chain from the apex of the arch and is accounted one of the sacred objects of the place.¹⁶

A tradition exists that the building was commenced by Atarkin himself but finished by his heir Khwājā Husain Chishti¹⁷ who carried the architect Shaikh Abdul¹⁸ on his back to Medina seven times in order to take the plan of a similar edifice there; the architect having forgotten the dimensions six times on his return to Nāgaur (Siddiqui 2001: 275).

Ginānī Tālāb

Akbar left Ajmer and started his journey towards Nāgaur after wishing the Dargāh of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti on 3 November 1570 (Friday 4 Jamadiul Aakhir, H. 978, see Map) (Siddiqui 2001: 83-84). After the journey of 12 consecutive days finally Akbar reached at Nāgaur on 15 November 1570 (Wednesday 15 Jamadiul Aakhir H. 978) (ibid.). He was welcomed at Nāgaur by Khan-i Kalan Mir Mohammad who also organized a lunch (*bhoj*) in respect of Akbar (ibid.). The emperor participated in the emperor in his *bhoj* and gifted him. Meanwhile, the

¹⁴ Personally visited this site with the survey team and conducted interviews during a physical survey of the site. Also see Gairrick, H.B.W. under General A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India, Report of A Tour in the Punjab and Rajputana in 1883-84*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ H.B.W. Gairrick under General A. Cunningham, R.E., vol. XXIII, pp. 69-71. Also see Khwaja Sufi Mohammad Ayyub Tariq Chishti Farooqui Jodhpur, 2009: 117-18.

¹⁷ This name is mentioned in the end of the Tughlaq inscription which was discovered by H.B.W. Gairrick. See H.B.W. Gairrick under General A. Cunningham, R.E., volume XXIII, p. 71.

¹⁸ Ibid.



Shrine of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nāgaurī Suwālī



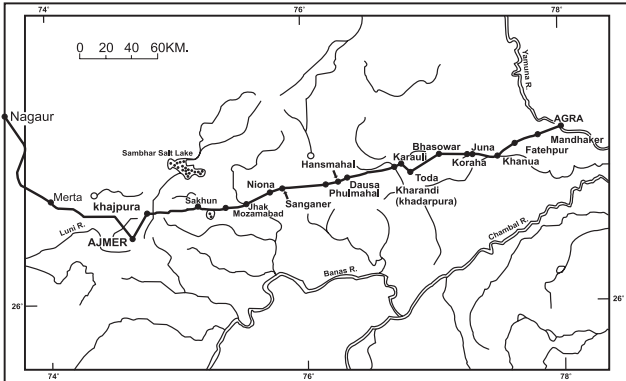
Main Gate of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nāgaurī Dargāh



Domes are seen from the side view



Front View of the Atarkin ka Darwāza



Akbar's visit at Nagaur 1570 CE



Ginānī Tālāb, Qasbā Nāgaur



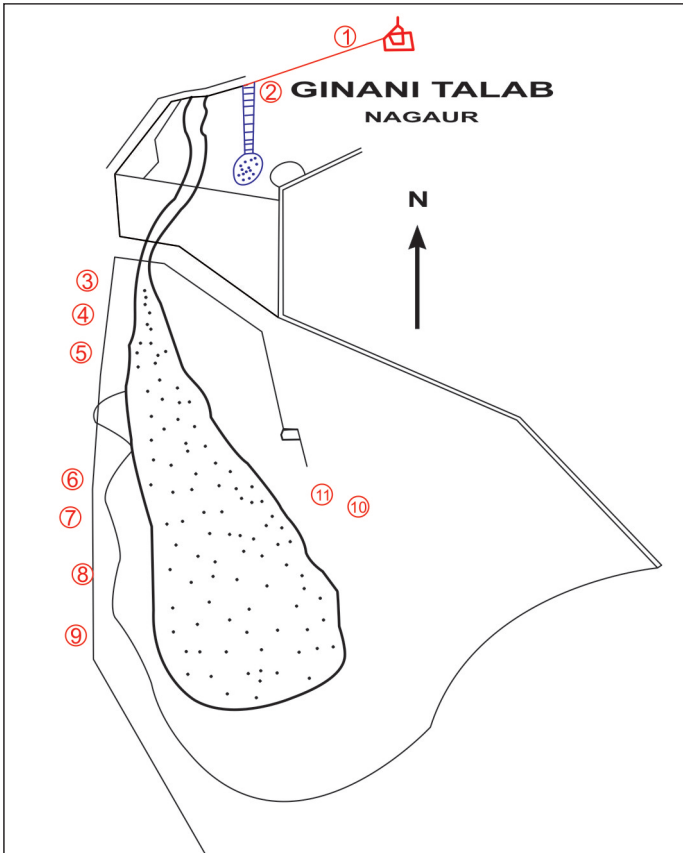
Inscription on the bank of Ginānī Tālāb, Qasbā Nāgaur



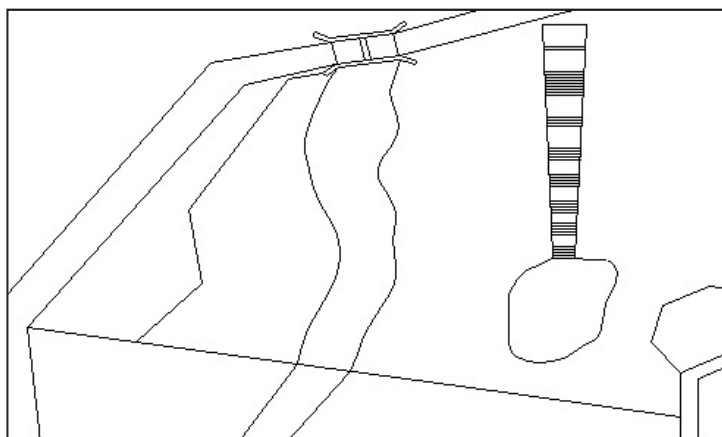
Dargāh Jhālṛā, Ginānī Tālāb Nāgaur



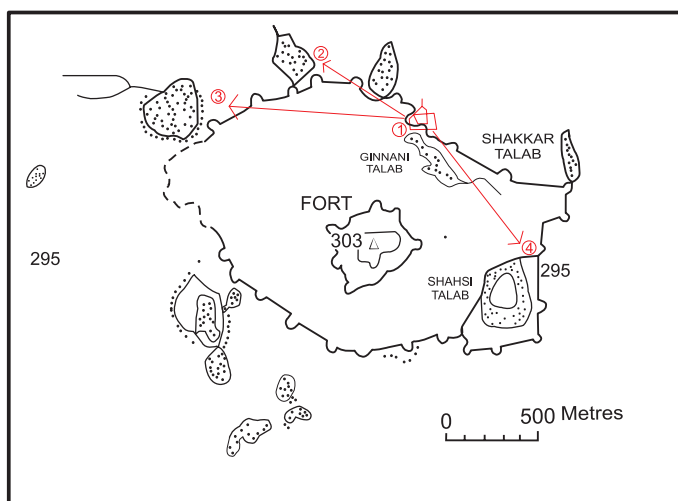
Stairs of Dargāh Jhālṛā, Gīnānī Tālāb Nāgaur



Plan: Gīnānī Tālāb, Qasbā Nāgaur



Plan: Dargāh Jhālā, Gīnanī Tālāb, Nāgaur



Contour map showing distance of Bāoṛīs from the shrine

emperor saw a *tālāb*. The people of the area had requested the Emperor Akbar and said that the affluence and gladness of the villages of Nāgaur are depended on these three *tālābs* whereas one of them is Kayadāni presently called as Gilānī or Ginānī *tālāb*.¹⁹ Akbar issued an order to clean and renovate all the water structures of the *qasbā*. Later on Ginānī tank was reconstructed by Rājā Rai Singh Rathore, elder son of Rao Amar Singh Rathore (Siddiqui 2001: 273-74). We have surveyed almost all the water bodies near the *tālāb* and the other monuments which are erected on the bank of this very large tank²⁰ (see Plan). Details are mentioned below.

Dargāh Jhālṛā (Bāoṛī)

It is also situated on the north bank of the *tālāb*, just near to the well. It is said that it was constructed at the time of the construction of Ginānī for the purpose of drinking water, especially was being utilized previously by the members of the Shrine of Khwaja Hamiduddin Nāgaurī. Interesting thing is that it has more than 30 stairs in the slope towards the *tālāb* and at the end it has a depth of more than 150 ft. As far as the author's study is concerned, this *jhālṛā* was explored by him with a survey team.²¹ (see serial no. 2 on the plan.)

After a cursory survey, it is made out that the *qasbā* Nāgaur was an important place in Rajasthan during the medieval period, which was known for its richness in socio-religious and cultural history. It is still

¹⁹ Other two *tālābs* were Shams and Kukur (latter Shakkar). The people of the area also explained to the emperor that many of the people migrated from their houses who were living near these *tālābs* due to scarcity of water because almost all these tanks were filled up by sands.

²⁰ This area was surveyed by us with the help of some locals: Maqbool Ahmad Ansari (48 years old, ward member of this region) and Kamal Kishor Sharma (55 years old, a member of the Sainji ki Baghichī). Our special thanks to both of them for their support and cooperation.

²¹ We don't have any final definition of *jhālṛā*. After discussing with old men (locals) and with the help of the available sources and works, we are able to define that the *jhālṛās* collect the subterranean seepage of *tālāb* or lake located upstream and reserves rain water.

maintained its popularity due to many heritage monuments, i.e. shrines, mosques, fort, temples and water bodies, etc.

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New Light on the War of Succession (1657-58 CE)

Based on Two Newly-Discovered Nishāns of
Prince Muhammad Shuja and Prince Dara Shukoh

M.A. Haque

PRINCE Shuja was the Governor of Bengal when the peace of Bengal was disturbed as in the words of Stewart,¹ “by the noise of a martial kettledrum”, announcing the commencement of the war of the succession. It was he who on the receipt of information of his father’s illness staked his claim to the throne by an appeal to arms. Extremely impatient to wait the final outcome of his father’s illness, Shuja started war preparations to capture the Imperial throne. When reports of Shahjahan’s recovery were conveyed, he doubted their validity on the ground that they had been fabricated to lure him into a trap. He thought that it was his brother Dara Shukoh’s trick to gain time against him. After collecting considerable resources and a large army, he advanced from Rajmahal in 1658 CE towards north India.²

Allahwardi Khan, the governor of Bihar joined Shuja, as he found himself unable to resist him. He went to Benares and paid homage to Prince Shuja who conferred on him high rank and rewards, and called him Khan Bhai. He was, however, not allowed to return to Patna and look after the administration of Bihar, as his services were needed in the impending war of succession. Allahwardi Khan was present at the battle of Bahadurpur in which Shuja was defeated by his young nephew, Sulaiman Shukoh, son of Dara Shukoh. Shahjahan in a letter urged Shuja to withdraw to Bengal and settle terms of peace offered by Mirza Raja Jai Singh, the imperial general deputed for the purpose. By this time the

¹ Stewart, Charles, 1813, *History of Bengal*, Calcutta: Black, Parry & Co., p. 255.

² *Māsir-i-Ālamgirī*, 4 (Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1870-79, tr. J.N. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1947), *Ālamgir-nāmā*, p. 27.

fact of the Emperor's recovery had become well known and the soldiery under Shuja could not be expected to fight against the reigning monarch. Shuja therefore agreed to retreat and repair his severed relations with his father. But the truce was violated by Sulaiman Shukoh who made a surprise attack on Shuja's army and routed it by inflicting heavy losses in men and money. This happened on 4 February 1658. Shuja escaped and took shelter in the fort of Monghyr.³ Meanwhile Sulaiman Shukoh and Mirzā Rājā Jai Singh received an urgent message from Dara Shukoh, who asked them to patch up peace with Shuja and hasten to the west to assist him against the joint forces of Murad Bakhsh and Aurangzeb. The terms of the treaty signed in May 1658, negotiated and settled by Shuja's plenipotentiary, Mirza Jan Beg and not by Allahwardi Khan. At the same time, correspondence was going on between Murad and Aurangzeb, on the one hand, and Shuja on the other.

Then came the news of Dara's defeat, at the battle of Samugarh (modern Shyamgarh) the imprisonment of his father and the usurpation of throne by his brother Aurangzeb. After much consideration. Shuja sent a congratulatory letter to Aurangzeb, who in his reply expressed feelings of gratitude and affection:

As you had often before begged the emperor Shahjahan for the province of Bihar, I now add it to your viceroyalty. Pass some time in peaceful atmosphere to administer it and repair your broken pomp and power. Like a true brother I shall not refuse you anything that you desire, be it land or money.⁴

Neither the professions of brotherly love nor the exaltation to a higher status could assuage the fears of Shuja against his brother who had treacherously imprisoned Murad and made the father captive in his own fort at Agra. No reliance could be placed on the plighted word of a

³ J.N. Sarkar, 1933, *Studies in Aurangzeb's Reign*, Calcutta: Orient Longman, p. 7, see also newly-discovered documents NAI Accession No.1864 which is a Nishān of Prince Dara Shukoh instructing Sulaiman Shukoh to expel him (Shuja) from Monghyr.

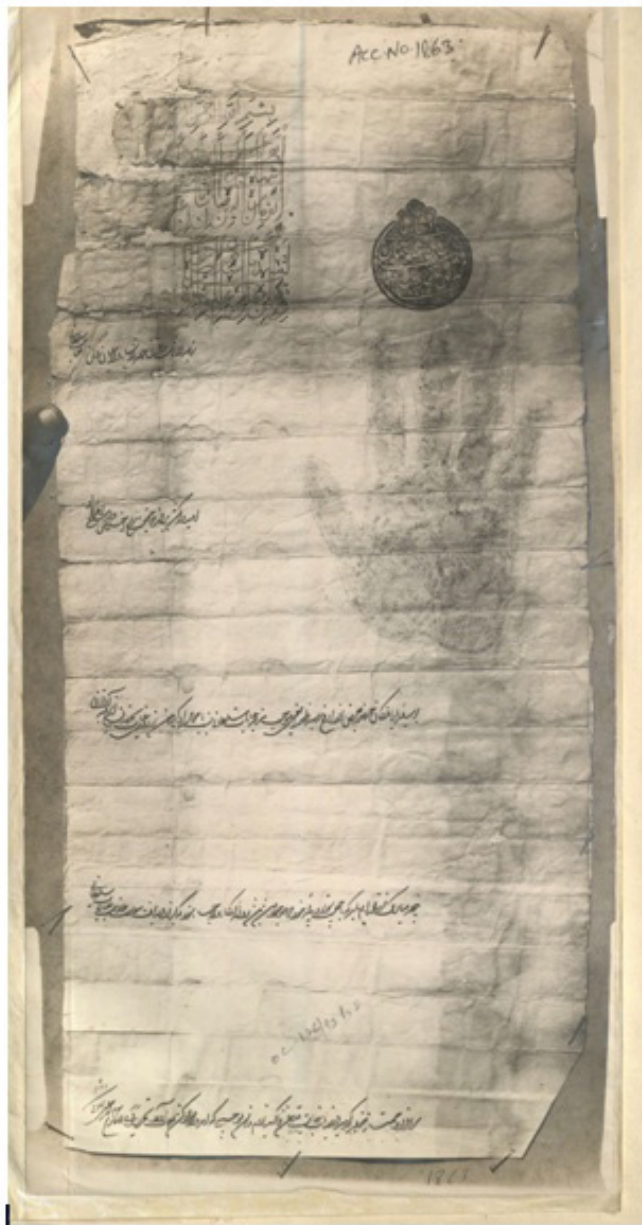
⁴ J.N. Sarkar (ed.) 1948, *History of Bengal, 1200-1757 A.D.*, Dacca: Dacca University, vol. II, p. 337. Shuja was afraid of Aurangzeb himself as he had to run away to Arakan in Burma (Myanmar) where the *zamīndār* of that area killed him and arrested his progeny. Yusuf Husain Khan (ed.), 1958, *Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign*, Hyderabad: Central Record Office.

faithless usurper who had unashamedly gone back on the pledge made to Murad a few months before. He could not be allowed to enjoy power or peace in this eastern region and sooner than later would be struck down by his victorious brother. His survival lay only in fighting and seizing the throne for himself. He declared that he would concentrate all his energies and resources “to secure the person of Shahjahan and restore the old government and then I shall stay at court as my father’s obedient servant”. Having decided on this policy of relentless struggle for supremacy, Shuja advanced towards Agra with an ever-increasing strength. His march was undisturbed by any opposition, as the soldiers, officers and leading men favoured his cause; yet near Allahabad an overwhelming army, superior both in number and strength, stood up to challenge him. On 5 January 1659 a battle took place at Khajwā which ended in the disastrous defeat of Shuja, dashing his hopes of dominance to pieces.

However, luckless prince effected his escape but was hotly chased by Mir Jumla, the ablest general of Aurangzeb. Manucci, says that Allahwardi Khan played a part of the traitor to Shuja at the battle of Khajwā. According to him the ex-governor of Bihar having received a secret letter from Aurangzeb, sent at the instance of Mir Jumla, “resorted to same tactics as Khalilullah Khan used with Dara”. Consequently, Prince Shuja accepted his advice, left his elephant, got on a horse and thus gave a handle to his rival brother to convert his defeat into victory.⁵

The subsequent events leading to the final flight of Shuja in May 1660 to Arakan form an interesting but grim story of matchless gallantry and endurance which the prince exhibited in course of his contest with the Imperialists. Accordingly the availability of two newly-found documents of Prince Shuja’s Nishan of 24 Jumada II 1068 AH (19 March 1658) may be seen at Annexure ‘A’ and Prince Dara Shukoh’s Nishan of 21 Rajab 1068 (14 April 1658) at Annexure ‘B’ which throw gleaming light on the “war of succession”. On the basis of these documents an effort has been made in this paper to enrich the information not available till date to the historians of medieval India. The availability of these two documents can also be judged from the photographic reproductions along with their English translations which shall open new vistas of research in this field.

⁵ Niccola Manucci (1653–1703), *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. I, pp. 330-31, tr. William Irvine, London, 1970-1980.



Annexure

Level 1

Sarnama: In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful,

Tughra: By the order of Abul Muzaffar Shihabuddin Muhammad Shahjahan Badshah
Ghazi, Sahib Qiran-i-Sani,

Nishan-i-Alishan: Zubda-i-Alam wa Alamiyan Sultan Shah Muhammad Shuja
Bahadur,

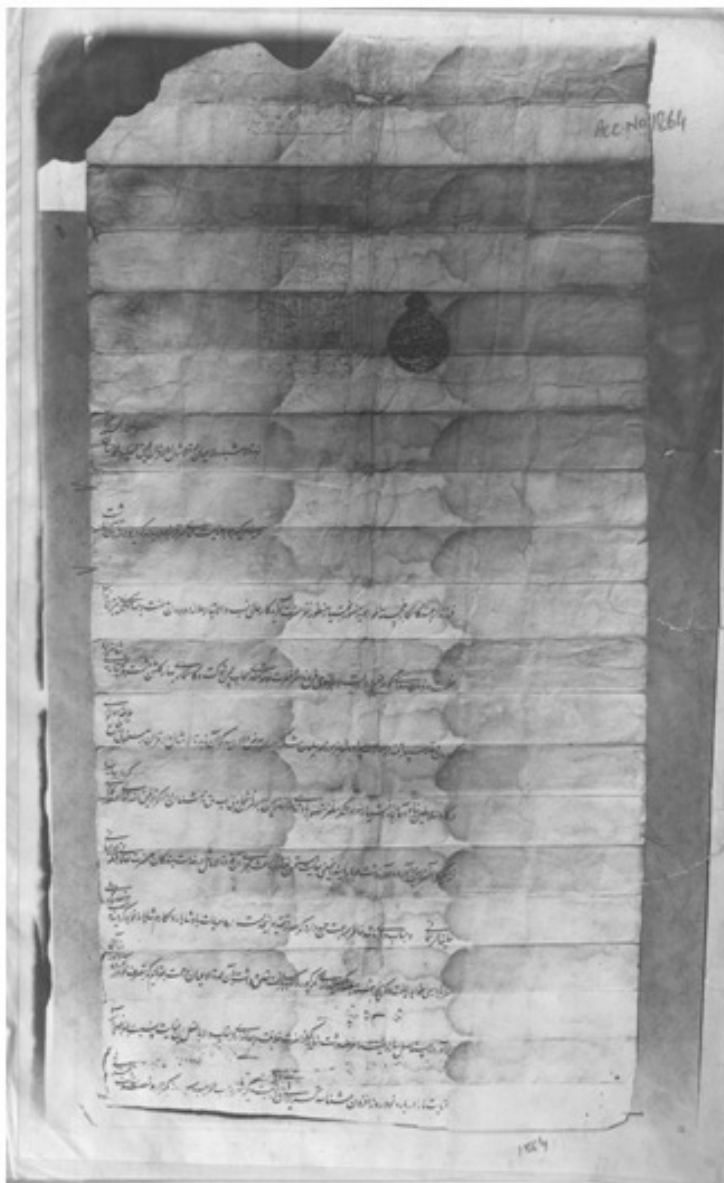
Muhr (Seal) of Prince Shah Shuja,

Punja (Palm impression) of Prince Shah Shuja.

Cream of the contemporaries and the peers, best of the nobles and excellent of the highest ones of the Deccan who has been hopeful of the princely favours should know that the true fact of his sincerity and the rightfulness of his trust was brought through those authorized to represent to the prince was brought to the august notice of the prince. This fact became the cause of much princely favours as it further increased the trust about him. Since for his satisfaction we have sent an impression of palm so that he should dispatch all the *sawār* (cavalry) and his family which he has, to the princely court as he shall be rewarded and distinguished for the service by the princely grace. Let him recognize this injunction in the matter and act according to what is ordered by the prince.

Written on 24th month of Jumada II Hijri 1068 AH (19 March 1658 AD).

(NAI Accession No. 1863)



Annexure

Level 1

Sarnama: In the name of Allah the Most Merciful and the Most Beneficent,

Tughra: 'A' Ba Farman-i-Abul Muzaffar Shihabuddin Muhammad Shahjahan
Badshah Ghazi Sahib Qiran-i-Sani,

Nishan: 'B' Alishan Zubda-i-Alam wa Alamiyan Sultan Shah Muhammad Dara
Shukoh,

Muhr (Seal) Shah-i-Buland Iqbal Muhammad Dara Shukoh Ibn-i-Shah Jahan
Badshah Ghazi.

Cream of the contemporaries and the peers, excellent of the equals and the closed worthy of favours and courtesies Raja Dal Singh, *zamīndār* of Gidhaur who has been distinguished by the princely favours should know that as per the representation of the fortunate, successful, having good manners, helper, successful independent who is the favourite of the Almighty Lord and the ruler of the world emperor, progeny of the ancestor of the empire, fruit of the greatness and the governor of the gem of the empire and high altitude of the magnificence of the star of nature and alertness, cloud of the orchard of magnificence and successfulness, the spring of the garden of greatness and independence, the prince of the sky high, of the sky of authority, the auspicious Prince Muhammad Sulaiman Shukoh Bahadur has represented to his highness that that cream of contemporaries and equals by the guidance of the prospects of the method of well-wishing adopted the court of the refuge of the kings as high as sky. The victorious and successful from his own controlled land may lead against the head of the coward (Na-Shuja) ill-mannered, un-rightful by the courtesy of the Almighty Lord should punish him as per his character, expel him from Monghyr and that land as this fact would become excellent which would cause benefits to that cream of the contemporaries in the service of the slaves of cream of *Ala Hazrat* (His Majesty) (title of Shah Jahan) *quibla* of both the world, *khalifatur Rehmani*. Let he keep composed his conscience as by performing the *khidmat* as it would be the imperial favours and he would be granted *mansab* and the excellent title. If he does want the *zamīndārī* of Kharagpur which relates to that unfortunate one which we have granted to them so that he would collect and get it received. The true facts of representation to His Majesty are known and that one consider this favour concerning him. Let him recognize my (princely) favour increasing day by day. Written on 21st *Rajab* 1068 AH (14 April 1658 AD).

(NAI Accession No.1864)

Cultural Aspect of Badaun As Reflected in Arabic and Persian Inscriptions (Thirteenth-Fourteenth Century)

Mohammad Nafeesh

FROM the beginning of the thirteenth century, a new chapter was added in the cultural history of India in general and of Badaun in particular. Mongols created havoc and fear by their violent raids in Central Asia which compelled the people to migrate from there to save their lives. Therefore, a large number of people migrated to India from Central Asia. As far as cultural history of Badaun is concerned it took a new turn when it was conquered by Qutbuddin Aibak by defeating its local king Dharampāla in 1197-98 CE. Iltutmish was appointed as the governor of Badaun some time before in 1206 CE and was interested in the construction of buildings and providing shelter to the refugees who migrated to Badaun from Central Asia and other parts of the world. During his governorship of Badaun, he built a mosque named Shamsi Jami Mosque of Badaun that bears inscriptions of Iltutmish, Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq. A deep study of these Arabic and Persian inscriptions highlights the close relationship of the sultāns of Delhi to the territory of Badaun and the architectural advancement of the region.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to decipher the language and script of the inscriptions that I have deciphered during my personal physical survey at Badaun while pursuing my MPhil and PhD. After analysing these inscriptions, I came to the conclusion that the territory of Badaun had emerged as the centre of imperial buildings during the thirteenth century for these buildings were being repaired from time to time by the sultāns of Delhi. The inscriptions of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq indicate that the extension of the mosque was made by them. Other buildings such as Shamsi Idgah, Shrine of Shaikh

Shahi Muitab and Shaikh Abu Bakr Muitab (*baṛe sarkār* and *choṭe sarkār*) having inscriptions of Iltutmish, Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Firoz Shah Tughlaq and Mahmud Shah Tughlaq who were well interested in the construction of the holy shrines and tombs of the sufi saints. These inscriptions are mostly written in *nastaliq* and *naskh*, and can be read easily, and a few of them are in *shikasta*, viz. having complex script and hard to read. However, these inscriptions depict a picture of Badaun as the centre of art and architecture and cultural glory during the thirteenth-fourteenth century.

An Arabic Inscription of Sultān Iltutmish

An Arabic inscription of Sultān Iltutmish was deciphered at the eastern entrance to the Jami Mosque of Badaun. It is inscribed on a slab of red sand stone measuring 8'2" × 1'10" in Arabic. The text of the inscription (Ross 1911-12: 22) is:

(١) ادخلوها بسلام امين السلطان المعظم شاهنشاه الاعظم مالك رقاب الامم مئس الدنيا والدين غياث الاسلام

(٢) وللمسلمين اعدل الملوك و السلاطين ابوالمظفر اللتتمس السلطاني ناصر امير المؤمنين خلد الله ملكه في شهر
سنة عشرين و ستمائة.

(1) “Enter it in peace safely (Sura XV 46) the great sultān, the most exalted Shahanshah, the lord of the neck of the people, Shams-ud-Duniya-Waddin, the help of Islam (2) and the Muslims the most just of the kings and sultāns, Abul Muzaffar Iltutmish, as Sultānī the helper of the prince of the Faithful, may God perpetuate his kingdom in the month of the year 620 AH”. The inscriptions at the eastern gate of the Jami-mosque of Badaun reveals that the entrance was constructed during the reign of sultan Iltutmish in 620 AH. – Bismil 1907: 42

Unfortunately, we have no inscription between 608 and 620 AH which might show us the gradual development of Iltutmish’s titles; non-dated coins of his early years seems to exist either. In the time between 608 and 620 AH he had assumed different *Kkunya* and added the title “the Helper of the Prince and the Faithful”. We know that in Rabi-ul-awwal 625 AH emissaries from the caliph reached Delhi (Juzjani 1864: 174) and on his later coins the name of the caliph Al-Muntasir Billah, who ruled from 623 to 640 AH occurs frequently. As a rule Iltutmish assumed the title “Nāsir (or Nasir) Amirul-Muminin” but in some cases it seems he was called “Qasim Amirul-Mominin” a title conferred on the Ghori dynasty.

Al-Qutbi has been replaced by “*Sultani*” which equally conveys that he had been the late sultān’s slave (Rose 1911-12: 22).

An Inscription of Sultān Iltutmish from Nagarun Mohalla at Badaun

A very important inscription of Sultān Shamsuddin Iltutmish has been deciphered from Badaun. It is inscribed on the headstone of the grave in the courtyard of the mosque of Makhdum Alam in the Nagarun Mohalla of the town.¹ The tablet measuring 95 × 52 cm is inscribed with the four lines text in Arabic, most of which obliterated due to the weathering of the stone, consequent upon its constant exposure to the elements of nature. The letters of the first and the last lines have completely flaked off, and in the second and the third lines too, a considerable portion is lost.

However, it is possible to assign this epigraph to Iltutmish. From style of writing, the record can be assigned to Iltutmish without any risk of contradiction to the Mamluk period. In addition to this, the title used for the reigning king, would heavily weigh against a post-Mamluk date for the epigraph. Now all the surviving titles of the text of this epigraph, inheritor of the kingdom of Solomon, lord of security for men of faith, right hand of the vicegerent of Allah, helped by the support from the above, rendered victorious over the enemies, are those found in the records of Iltutmish. On the other hand, the only other Mamluk king for whom an epigraph uses the honorific title “inheritor of the kingdom of Solomon” is Nasiruddin Mahmud (Desai 1966: 14).

Despite the damaged nature of the epigraph, it has been possible to decipher almost the whole writing as it exists on the stone. The date portion of the king’s name, *kunya* and regal titles are lost. The extant text, apart from the honorific titles quoted above, seems to record the construction of a well. It is a matter of regret that only the name of the person who constructed the well has defied decipherment. His father’s name Mahmud is legible. The text of the Arabic inscription (*ibid.*) of four lines is:

¹ *ARIE*, 1960-61, No. D, 239. This appears to be the tomb of Mulham Shahid (Führer 1891: 22), where the inscription is stated to be in Kufi, of the time of Iltutmish. See also Nevill (1907: 190).

- (١)
- (٢) الملك سليمان ذى الامان ابل اليمان يمين خليفه [الله؟] المرید من السماء [المظفر على
الاعداء]
- (٣) و بناه هذا البئر العبد الضعيف الراجى الخائف ... بن محمود
- (٤)

(1)

(2) ... of the sultāns, inheritor of the kingdom of Solomon, surety of protection for the men of faith, right hand of the vicegerent of Allah, helped (by support) from above rendered victorious over the enemies ...

(3) ... And this well was constructed by the weak creature, hopeful (of Allah's mercy) and fearful (of His wrath), ... , son of Mahmud...

(4)

This inscription of Iltutmish is fragmentary, but has important information which is not given by any contemporary source.

Another inscription of Iltutmish was found in the mosque attached to the tomb of Shaikh Ahmad Khandan at Badaun (ASI 1987: 30). The inscription is interesting from the paleographical point of view, showing how in this period site by site with the bolt, various characters of the orthodox *naskh* script, there existed style which perhaps is *naskh* in its element verge on the border of Tughra and possess the double quality of being ornamental and distinct. This inscription is the only example of this peculiar style; we have quite a good specimen of it in the inscription of Iltutmish over the dual way of the second storey of the Qutub Minar. These two epigraphs are important to the student of Muslim palaeography in India as indicated how the influence of the Kufic style, which was prominent in the earliest Pathan ornamental writings, was later on discarded and replaced by the Tughra style. But the Tughra style was not yet developed.

The inscription has been studied by Raziuddin Bismil but he succeeded in reading only the date portion of it (1907: 42). The epigraph, although incomplete, is fairly legible and the name of the calligrapher

Aitkin is absolutely clear. In Balban's reign there were two Maliks of this name, Malik Jamaluddin Aitkin Baridul Mulk and Amin Khan Aitkin Muri Daraj latter may possibly be identified with the calligrapher of the inscription because Amin Khan incurred the displeasure of Balban on his defeat at Lakhnauti and was hanged in 687 AH two years before the date of the inscription. The language of the inscription is Persian and its phraseology, to a certain extent, resembles that of the Quwwat-ul-Islam inscription of Qutbuddin Aibak. The inscription measures 2 × 1 ft. The text of the inscription (ASI 1987; Yazdani 1987: 31) is:

... سادا وکی (۴) بنده یتگین بانای این خیر را بر عارحمت مند نماید من و قنّب فی الغره من رمضان سنة ثلث و ثمانین و ستمائیه.

Help the slave Aitkin, the founder of this charitable building with an invocation of blessings and (it was inscribed on the first of Ramadan 683 AH/ 1284 CE).

The above inscription has Tughra and Naskh styles of script and is in decorative form denoting excellent Islamic calligraphy.

Inscriptions from Badaun during the Khalji Sultāns of Delhi

Some important inscriptions have been found in Badaun during the Khalji sultāns of Delhi. The inscription of Sultān Alauddin Khalji was deciphered from Sahaswan (18 miles west of Badaun). The earliest mention of Sahaswan occurs in the *Āin-ī-Akbarī* but its closed proximity to Badaun (18 miles west) does not preclude the possibility of its fort, which legends attribute to a Hindu *rājā*, Sahasrabāhu, being an important stronghold during the rule of early sultāns of Delhi. Alauddin as a prince was the governor of Badaun and when he got murdered his uncle Jalaluddin Khalji, he marched from Kara and passed via Badaun where he recruited a large number of troops amounting 56,000 cavalry and 60,000 infantry (Ross 1911-12: 22). This inscription reveals clearly that in the early part of his reign the Fief of Badaun was conferred on Umar Khan, who subsequently taking advantage of the sultān's absence from the capital during the siege of Raṇathambhore broke out in revolt. The Sultān sends some officers to suppress the rebellion and before Omar Khan could affect anything he was taken prisoner and punished. The inscription is dated 700 AH (1300 CE) about the time that Umar Khan's

revolt subsided and records the building of strong fort by the order of Sultān Alauddin Khalji. The inscriptional tablet is now in Jami Mosque at Sahaswan (Qazi Muhalla) (Desai 1966: 8) with which it apparently has no connection and seems to have been brought from the local fort after it had fallen into ruins. The style of writing is interesting from the palaeographic point of view, showing a tendency of arranging the Naskh character in such a manner as to produce a decorative effect, viz. the beginning of the Tughra style. In this inscription, the artist had made all such letters prominent having a vertical stroke at their beginning or at their end and by arranging them in a series of lines like a row of arrows. A beautiful example of this device is the Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah's inscription of Ghor dated 863 AH.²

The language of the inscription is Persian and it consists of one line only. The inscribed portion of the tablet measures 5'9" × 11". The text of inscription (ASI 1987: 17) is:

This fort with lofty pillars.... The refuge of the Faithful, was built by the order of his exalted majesty (lit. presence), the lord of the sultāns

بناء این حصن رفیع ارکان مامن اہل ایمان بفرمان مجلس اعلیٰ خدایگان سلاطین جهان سایہ رحمت بزدان علاء الدنیا
والذین الوائق بنصر اللہ المجاہد فی سبیل اللہ ابوالمظفر محمد شاہ السلطان ناصر امیر الممنین خلد اللہ ملکہ بتاریخ روز جمع
غرہ ماہ جمادی الاولی سال بقصد از ہجرت نبی علیہ السلام و التحیۃ.

of the world, the shadow of the divine mercy, 'Ala-ud-duniya-waddin, the king trusting in divine help, the warrior for god sake, Abul Muzaffar Muhammad Shah, the sultān, the helper of the prince of the faithful, may God perpetuate his kingdom! On Friday the first of Jumada 1,700 years after the migration of the prophet, may peace and blessings be upon him! (13 January 1301 CE).

This inscription was found during the excavation of the fort near the Jami Mosque of Sahaswan in Qazi *mohalla* which clarifies that the fort which legends attribute to Hindu Sahasrabāhu might have constructed by Alauddin Khalji during his recruitment of new Khalji army after coming from assassinating Jalaluddin Khalji in Kara.

Inscription in the Jami Masjid at Alāpur (Badaun)

Another very important inscription which is controversial in dates was

² *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1873, plate V.

found at Alāpur, a small town in the Dataganj tehsil of Badaun. According to a legend, it was founded by Alauddin Alam Shah (1445-51 CE) of the Saiyad dynasty,³ who after abdication of the throne of Delhi, stayed at Badaun for the rest of his life (d.1478 CE). But the presence of this inscription, dated 707 AH (1307 CE) reveals the fact that Alauddin Khalji was the governor of Badaun before his accession to the throne, induce to surmise that Alāpur was named after that sultān.

The inscription is fragmentary.⁴ The inscriptional tablet in its present condition measures 2' 3½" × 9". The name of the builder unfortunately occurs just where the stone is broken and therefore could not be deciphered; but his official designation—Dad Bek (master of justice) is preserved. The style of writing is Naskh with an attempt of ornamentation.

The inscription (ASI 1987: 21) is read as follows:

.....بن..... داد بک بخطه بداؤن فی، لمنتصف من ربیع الاول سنه سبع و سعماته

.... Son of ... Dad Bek (Master of Justice) in the province of Badaun,
in the middle of Rabi I, 707 AH (September 1307 CE).

Through this inscription, it is clear that Alāpur, a town in Dataganj tehsil of the territory of Badaun was founded by Alauddin Khalji, not by Alauddin Alam Shah.

Inscriptions of the Tughlaq Sultāns of Delhi from Badaun

During the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, we do not have any inscription in the territory of Badaun. However, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq was closely associated to the province of Badaun and he got repaired the Shamsi Jami Mosque of Badaun and at least two inscriptions of the sultān have been found in Badaun. The first of these inscriptions appears above the northern entrance of the Jami Mosque⁵ which was originally constructed by Iltutmish. It is written in two lines in Arabic on a slab of a stone measuring 80 × 45 cm and assigns the construction of a building, the nature of which is not specified, to 1325-26 CE by the

³ Alauddin Alam Shah was the last ruler of the Saiyad dynasty. Yazdani has wrongly placed him of Lodi dynasty (ASI 1987; Yazdani 1987: 21).

⁴ *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. XLI, p. 112.

⁵ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, 1960-61, No. D, 230.

order of Abul-Mujahid Muhammad bin Tughlaq Shah to Husain, son of Husain, the *kotwalbek* of Badaun region. It is difficult to determine the nature of the original building which was built by the order of the king. In case it is *in situ*, it would mean that the Jami Mosque had also been repaired and restored in the fourteenth century (Desai 1966:7).

The inscription has been written in Naskh script of a fairly good type; the elongated shafts of the letters are to be noted in particular. The text of the inscription reads as follows (Desai 1966:8):

1. This building was ordered to be constructed by His exalted Majesty, the shadow of the beneficent Allāh, [A]bul-Mujahid Muhammad bin Tughlaq Shah, the Sultān.

(١) امر بهذ العمادة الحضرة الاعلى ظل ظل الله الرحمن بوالمجاهد محمد بن تغلقشاه السلطان

(٢) خلد الله ملكه و سلطانه فى سنة ست و عشريس و سبعمائة معماره حسين بن حسين كو تواليك بخطه
بداون-

2. May Allāh perpetuate his kingdom and sovereignty, in the year (AH) six and twenty and seven hundred (726 AH = 1325-26 CE). Its builder is Husain, son of Husain, Kotwalbek of Badaun region.⁶

It is difficult to determine the identity of Husain because we do not have any description anywhere that he was the *kotwalbek* of Badaun region. This inscription is the only authentic record of Husain, which indicates his post of the *kotwalbek* of the territory of Badaun. No doubt, Isami does not mention an officer of Muhammad bin Tughlaq Shah bearing this name,⁷ who later deflected to and received the title of Gurshap from Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah in 1347-48 CE, but whether both are identical cannot be said clearly.

Through this epigraph, we come to the conclusion that Hussain bin Hasan, the *kotwal* of Badaun, maintained law and order and looked after cultural activities, fairs and festivals, Urs and other activities in the city.

The other inscription of Muhammad bin Tughlaq Shah from Badaun is engraved on a tablet measuring 73 × 25 cm which is now fixed into

⁶ J.F. Blakistan (1926: 1-5) reads *kotwal* instead of *kotwalbek*. The reading of the epigraph by Raziuddin Bismil (1907: 42) is incorrect at some places.

⁷ *Futuh-us Salatine*, pp. 499-500, 502, 504, 514, 516.

the north wall inside the tomb of Miran Mulham Shahid (Desai 1966: 8). It consists of three lines of writing in Arabic executed in relief in fairly elegant Naskh characters. This epigraph is important for it reveals the record of the construction of a new building by Muhammad Sultani, an official of Badaun in 1328 CE (ibid.). The text does not clarify as to which new building was constructed, nor does the epigraph seem to be *in situ*. Nevertheless, the record is important in that it has preserved the name of an official. Also the use in the text of the titles professing allegiance to the caliph may be noted. The text of the inscription (ibid.) is:

1. The new construction took place during the reign of the great sultān, Abul-Mujahid in the path of Allāh, (namely) Muhammad, son of

- ١- اتفق عمارة جديد في عهد سلطان عظم ابوالمجاهد في سبيل الله محمد بن
- ٢- تغلق شاه السلطان ناصر امير المومنين خلد الله ملكه و سلطان و اعلى امره و شأنه.
- ٣- المعمد محمد سلطانى يوم احدى الثامن من ربيع الاخر سنة ثمان عشرين و سبعماتية.

2. Tughlaq Shah, the Sultan, *Nasiri Amiri-i-Muminin* (helper of the leader of the faithful), may Allah perpetuate his kingdom and sovereignty and elevate his affair and dignity.

3. The builder is Muhammad Sultani. On Sunday, eight of Rabiul-Akhar, year (AH) twenty-eight and seven hundred (8th Rabi 'II AH 728 = 21 February 1328 CE).

We have no definite information about the identity and career of Muhammad Sultani, the builder. However, he was an official of importance is evident from his appellation Sultani.

This epigraph is also important as it shows the keen interest of Muhammad Sultani in art and architecture in his area of control.

An Epigraph of Nasiruddin Muhammad Shah, Son of Firoz Shah, Dated AH 792 from Badaun

An important inscription of Sultān Nasiruddin Muhammad Shah, son of Sultān Firoz Shah Tughlaq, is found in Badaun. It is engraved in relief on a slab of the stone measuring 73 × 25 cm which is fixed over the

inner side of the western gate of the porch opening into the Dargāh of Hazrat Badruddin Shah Wilayat at Badaun.⁸ Its reading was published by Raziuddin, but it is faulty.⁹ However, this valuable record states that the tomb of the saint of Hazrat Badruddin Shah Wilayat was constructed in 1390 CE by Khizr, son of Nasrullah who was the *kotwal* of the *iqta* of Badaun. It is composed in Persian and is inscribed in three lines. The style of writing is in conventional Naskh of a very high order. Indeed, its calligraphy is the most elegant and beautiful in comparison to other epigraphs. The text of the inscription (Desai 1966: 20) is:

عمارت گنبد عبد سلطان الزمان ناصر الدنيا والدين محمد شاه فيروز شاه السلطان.

خلد ملكه بانى بنا روضه مشايخ الكبار بدر الملة و الدين طاب ثراه راجى حضرت اله

خضر بن نصر الله كو توالت خطه بداون جازه الله فى الثانى من ذى الحجة سنة اثنى و تسعين و سبعمائة.

1. The building of the tomb (took place in) the reign of the sultān of the age, Nasirud'-Dunya wad'-d-Din Muhammad Shah, (son of) Firoz Shah, the sultān.
2. May (Allāh) perpetuate his kingdom! the founder of the edifice of the mausoleum of the great Shaikh Badru'l Millatwa'd-Din, may (Allāh) sanctify his grave, (is) the hopeful of the presence of God,
3. Khizr, son of Nasrullah, *kotwal* of the district (*khitta*) of Badaun, may God reward him! On the second of the month of Dhil-Hijja, year (AH) ninety-two and seven hundred (2nd Dhil-Hijja 792 AH = 11 November 1390 CE).

Nothing is known about the builder Khizr. As regards his father, Nasrullah, Shams Siraj Afif mentions Qazi Nasrullah who was the *qāzī* of the army of Firoz Shah in 777 AH (1375-76 CE).¹⁰ Nasrullah was the brother of famous AINU'-i-Mulk Multani, governor of Oudh under Muhammad bin

⁸ *ARIE*, 1960-61, No. D, 224, where its correct purport was given for the first time. It was copied by Z.A. Desai, Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of India, Nagpur. For other inscriptions on the Dargāh, see *ARIE*, 1960-61, Nos D, 225-29.

⁹ Raziuddin (1907: 49) writes first two words of the inscription as *imārat-ī-kunnad* instead of *imārat-ī-gumbad*.

¹⁰ *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi.*, pp. 378-79. Cf. Desai, 1966: 20.

Tughlaq, who had unsuccessfully revolted against the latter.¹¹ Whether any or both of these personages have anything to do with the father of the builder of the tomb, it is difficult to find out. Historical works are silent on these points. Therefore, the information supplied by the record that Khizr had constructed the tomb of the saint, whose spiritual follower he may have been, is known for the first time from the present epigraph; this information, though meagre, is valuable for the history of Badaun.

As regards the saint Badruddin Shah Wilayat, he lived some time during the second half of the thirteenth century CE. His full name was Shaikh Abu Bakr MuiTAB. The famous divine, Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh Dilhi, is reported to have met and held him in high regards.¹² The exact date of his death is not known. The title Sahib-i-Wilayat is used by Shaikh Abdul Haq of Delhi, who places his tomb behind the Shamsi-Idgāh (Haq 1332 AH: 49; Bismil 1907: 33-35) at Badaun.

The study of the inscriptions of Badaun (thirteenth-fourteenth century CE) highlights the best example of Sultanate calligraphy and architecture and these inscriptions are very helpful to explore the construction of the monuments, their patrons and the date and period of the concerned sultāns and their supervision in the construction of the monuments of Badaun. The study also shows their interests in constructing splendid buildings both religious (mosques, *madrasās* and shrines) and political (forts and military stations). After going through inscriptional calligraphy in detail, we come to know that these inscriptions are the excellent examples of Sultanate mural calligraphy which appears to be inspired by the Persianate style of mural calligraphy.

After having a detailed study of these Perso-Arabic inscriptions, it is clear that Badaun enjoyed a place for cultural hegemony, whether they were its traditions, hospices of many sufis, *madrasās*, viz. colleges, as the stronghold of education and administrative units, as well as a place for hunting and pilgrimage for the sultāns of Delhi and general masses.

¹¹ Izzuddin Isami, 1948, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, ed. A.S. Usha, Madras: University of Madras, p. 455.

¹² Nizami 1959: 210. Raziuddin (1907) gives some details about Shaikh Badruddin Shah Wilayat. *Tazkirat-ul-Wasilin*, Gulab Singh and Sons Press, Lucknow, 1945, pp. 32-35. Z.A. Desai (1966: 20) has wrongly placed the place of publication of the book to Badaun, 1945.

All these factors contributed to make the territory of Badaun the second metropolis after Delhi during the thirteenth-fourteenth century CE.

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Practice of the Robes of Honour under the Mughals

Mohammad Anash

HONOURING the nobles with the robes of honour was an important practice of the Mughals throughout their reign. It's always composed of a high value textile, the core symbol was a cloak which was the outermost, most visible garment of courtly life. It was given by a king and often accompanied by other apparel, such as a turban, a waist wrap, a shirt.

The robes of honour ceremony was undoubtedly known to Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire in India, but its practice did not seem common or central to legitimacy or loyalty among his group of Chaghtai Turks. These robes used in the ceremony were generally shirts of fine cotton with golden thread work, silk turbans, jackets of muslin with golden embroidery and silk coats. Other transactional objects included quivers and daggers, but never core symbols of kingship such as standards or flags (Babur 1989: 632-33).

The ceremony was, however, common and central to diplomacy and kingship in India. Babur quickly adapted and learned the use of robes of honour in a variety of settings. If we look carefully at the occasions in the last decade of his life in India, in which Babur gave robes of honour, there were some crucial situations.

He gave robes of honour to a prince of the blood, on some special occasion, such as marriage, birth of a son, or leaving to lead an important military campaign. Robes were only part of an elaborate transfer which often included nearly all the "transactional" objects (such as jewelled daggers and horses), and some of the core symbols of kingship (such as flags, standards and drums) (ibid.: 621-31). He also gave robes of honour to nobles in expectations of crucial service. Thus, Babur gave full robes of honour and other transactional objects to the two nobles who

“kneeled down”, that is, became responsible for the revenue of Bihar and Bengal. He gave full robe of honour and a sword and belt, a horse, and an umbrella to the noble who he made in charge of Bihar (ibid.: 667). Babur gave robes of honour to a man who had performed excellent service safely ferrying his army across a river. He also gave robes to two wrestlers who had performed very well (ibid.: 612, 632, 650 and 685). It is equally suggestive that one of the first robes of honour which Babur gave out in India was not to a Muslim, but to a Hindu in the Punjab who helped him (ibid.: 393).

After Babur, we note that all of Babur’s practice of robes of honour continued. The *Humāyunāmā* at one point mentions 12,000 robes of honour carried to Mecca by the leader of a caravan sponsored by the Emperor. It mentions a feast given by one of Humāyun’s main wives during which 7,000 robes of honour were given out. At marriage 12,000 robes were given out, 2,000 of them were special (Begum 1989: 69, 114 and 126). The *Āin-ī-Akbarī* mentions that every season, there were made 1,000 complete suits for the imperial wardrobes, and 120, made up in twelve bundles, were always kept ready (Fazl 2011: 96). Jahangir gave robes of honour to the dancers at an entertainment he personally enjoyed (Jahangir 1989: 107 and 109).

With the passing of time, robes of honour became an important custom of the Mughal empire. Mughals were bestowed robes of honour on a large number of nobles on regular occasions throughout the year, such as solar–lunar new year and king’s solar and lunar birthday, Eid, the anniversary of the succession and important life-cycle ceremonies. These were times of promotion into the *mansabdārī* system and promotion within it. Presenting a large number of robes suggested reward groups, rather than just individuals, and reflected a delicate balance of ethnic groups and clans within ethnic groups – Afghan, Rājput, Turks, Bluchs, Uzbeks – so characteristic of their regions.

After assuming throne, Jahangir gave out hundreds of robes of honour and thirty horses in a day; the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* contains page after page of Jahangir’s bounties of why an older noble or a childhood companion deserved them. We can watch him, through these transactional symbols and personal interviews building a workable power base of loyal nobles (Jahangir 1989: 13 and 20).

During the reign of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan, robes of honour became a craze along with the increasing prosperity of the rest of the court.

Like the *mansabdārī* system and so many other features of the Akbar's reign, there was movement to grade, quantify and monetarily evaluate each kind of robe of honour.

All articles which have been bought, or woven to order, or receive as tribute or presents, are carefully preserved, they are again taken out for inspection, or given to be cut or to be made up, or to be given always as present. Experienced people inquire continually into the prices of articles used both formerly and at present, as a knowledge of the exact price is conducive to the increase of the stock. – Fazl 2011, vol.I: 94

Robes of honour rapidly became part of the etiquette associated with acceptance of a *farmān* which was to put on the accompanying robe of honour, place place the *farmān* on one's forehead, and performing *taslīm*, that is, bowing three times and moving the hand from the open palm against the forehead, to the back of the hand touching the ground (ibid.: 168 and 274).

The *farmān* and the robe of honour also came to stand in for the king for men stationed far from the capital. During the reign of Jahangir, we find the description of the *farmān* in Bengal, which was far away from the capital, and all the Khans of the Bihar *sūbā* obtained the eternal honour of performing the rites of obeisance to the all important *farmāns*, by holding them with two hands and placing them on their heads and eyes (Nathan 1936: 11). During the reign of Jahangir, the granting of the robe of honour had been transformed from a strictly kingly privilege to one held by the commander during the field. By the Balkh campaign during the reign of Shahjahan, the commander carried several thousand robes of honour, which he brought out in the field when the campaign was somehow successful¹. The robes of honour was a clear symbol of submission. At Akbar's court, Afghan who had fought against him were pardoned with robes of honour.²

War prisoners were also pardoned and given robes of honour for

¹ *Shahjahan-Nama*, p. 355.

² Abul Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, vol. III, p. 734.

some Persian prisoners during the reign of Jahangir. Mirza Nathan's biography recounts that a prominent *zamīndār* named Rājā Pratāp Āditya was surrounded by the Mughal forces in Bengal and he surrendered. "The commander gave him good welcome in his tent. After a while he has given a horse and a befitting robe of honour and permitted to go to his camp with full regard." He was given robes of honour by much lower nobles, such as Mirza Nathan himself (1936: 137 and 230).

In conclusion we can say that the robes of honour ceremony was highly useful to kings in a variety of circumstances. The ceremony established a direct, personal and important link between the sovereign and the recipient.

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Beneficiaries of Madad-ī Ma‘ash, Rozīnah and Hiba

Some Reflections on Persian Documents of the
Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries from Malwa

Nishat Manzar

I

IN the Oriental Section of the National Archives of India there is a collection of papers in the form of legal documents identified as “Bhopal Papers”. The collection belongs to a sufi and *qāzī* family of the erstwhile *sarkār* of Ālamgīrpur (Bhilsa) in the Mughal *subāh* of Malwa.¹ There are 103 documents most of which are the original documents or true copies of the *farmāns* and *nishāns* issued from the family beginning from the period of Aurangzeb. One or two documents are of the period of Akbar also. Numerous documents belong to the first half of the eighteenth century and the series comes down to the last century (i.e. the twentieth century). For the most part, the papers are about the *madad-ī ma‘ash* grants, *hiba*, *rozīnah*, sale and purchase deeds. It is quite surprising that some of these documents about the assignment of land grants are exclusively meant for women. Some of the papers suggest that the assets, both movable and immovable, belonging to some of the deceased women, were generally transferred to the female members of the same family. Some of the scholars have utilized information contained in this collection (Hussain 2002: 413-14).² However, papers preserved in this collection about the

¹ The members of the family received grants mainly in the *parganās* of Raisen, Shahjahanpur and Ichhavar within the territory of *sarkār* Ālamgīrpur. Few papers are about *madad-i ma‘ash* in Sironj and *parganā* Rāmgarh also. This collection was acquired in 2015 by the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

² Zakir Hussain, 2002, *A Family Collection of Documents from Mughal*
→

women beneficiaries are still untapped. Here an attempt is being made to evaluate some of these papers that belong mainly to the period of Emperor Aurangzeb (1657–1707) and come down to the period of Mohammad Shah (1719-48).

The extended family, that had been the beneficiary of these grants, is believed to have been the successors of a renowned scholar of the Sultanate period named Maulana Alauddin Usuli, who was one of the teachers of the famous sufi Sheikh Nizamuddin Awliya. Another important name that appears in these documents is of Qazi Abdul Wahab of the period of Aurangzeb.³ Somehow, there are only few copies of *farmāns* and *nishāns* in Qazi Abdul Wahab or his family members' names.⁴ Documents from the period of Aurangzeb onwards are issued to the members of a few families who could be the members of the same extended family as similar names repeatedly appear in various papers till the next few decades.⁵ As has been mentioned above, female members were also the recipient of the grants in the form of *madad-ī ma'ash*, *saliānah* and *rozīnah*, while family members shared the movable and immovable property among themselves in the form of *hiba*, of which some of the recipients are women also.

← *Times*, PIHC, 2002, pp. 413-14. Zakir Hussain, Assistant Director, Oriental Division, National Archives, New Delhi, was the first to have utilized these documents during his posting in Bhopal Archives in 2002. About the information regarding the relationship of the family under discussion with Maulana Alauddin Usuli, I am thankful to Zakir Hussain for sharing with me one of his papers which is under publication. Irfan Habib (*IHC*, 2006) also has evaluated a very important document which is an inventory of *tarka* (inheritance) left by some of the deceased members of a family. I am indebted to Faizan Ahmad, Oriental Division, National Archives India, for giving me information about the presence of these papers in NAI.

³ He has been identified as Syed Abdul Wahab or Sheikh Abdul Wahab also.

⁴ These are related to the *madad-ī ma'ash* for the upkeep of Mu-i Mubārak (sacred hair of the Prophet) which is still with the family in Bhopal. Bhopal itself was founded at the site where the village of Nawābpur was located. The family had various grants in the *mauzā* of Nawābpur.

⁵ Since the papers have been acquired by NAI from one place, beneficiaries must have belonged to one family.

II

As the head of the families, three names (and those in immediate relation) continuously appear in these papers, i.e. of Sheikh Abdul Qavi, Mohammad Isa Jaunpuri⁶ and Sheikh Bahauddin. It is very surprising that papers related to the grandson of Mir Qamruddin Khan (*nāzim* and *vizīr* of *subāh* Malwa) namely Qazi Abdul Wahab are quite few. Somehow, various papers of grants meant for others carry the stamp of Mir Qamruddin and Qazi Abdul Wahab both.

Among the women, Bībī Maryam and Bībī Shafiā are few of those who enjoyed all kinds of assistance, i.e. in the form of *madad-ī ma‘ash* (revenue grants) and *rozīnah* (daily allowance) from the state; as well as received land, precious items and money in the form of *hiba* (gift), or inheritance (*tarka*) from the family members, both from men and women. There are some more names who mainly received revenue assignments, but no help in any other form. Two documents are of immense importance where seventy-two women, perhaps in close relation to each other, received a collective revenue grant, quite big in size, from Aurangzeb in the *parganā* of Raisin, *sarkār* Ālamgīrpur in Malwa.

Bībī Maryam and her husband Mullah Ahmad both received favours in the form of cash and revenue grants. Mullah Ahmad, son of Sheikh Bahauddin and a disciple of Sheikh Kamaluddin Awliya, was a native of Kora (Kara) Allahabad where he had first received half rupee (*nīm rupiā*) as *yaumiā* from the treasury of Allahabad with a condition that he will specifically teach *mishkāt*. When was he shifted to *parganā* Raisin (also identified as *qasbā* Raisin) in *sarkār* Ālamgīrpur is not known. However, the one single document suggests both – that his *yaumiā* stands cancelled and he is being assigned 37 *bighās* of land in *parganā* Raisin.⁷ Later on a document specifies that the same person was getting two and then five *ṭankās* as *rozīnah* while he is settled in Raisin. In a while he gets the privilege of 2 *sikkāmurādi* as *yaumiā* (daily allowance) during the reign of Aurangzeb in his 30th RY.⁸ Subsequently he is shown receiving sixty

⁶ Sometimes he is identified as Sayyid Isa and Sheikh Isa also.

⁷ Doc. 13. Seal of Qazi Abdul Wahab for the year 1071, and copy of the document prepared in 17th RY of Aurangzeb.

⁸ Doc. 27, 28, 29, 31, 81 (1091 *hijrī*).

bighā land as *madad-ī ma‘ash* with the specific justification that he had no source of income.⁹ Sheikh Ahmad died sometime in Aurangzeb’s period.¹⁰ Afterwards, Bībī Maryam is mentioned to have received thirty *bighās* of land in Nawābpur village in *madad-ī ma‘ash* along with her children (*farzandān*)¹¹ during the reign of Bahadur Shah (1122 *hijrī*) and the same grant was renewed in the 2nd RY of Farrukh Siyar. It is very clear from the script of the paper that her husband is dead and that “she has no source of income”.¹² It is noteworthy that while her husband had received sixty *bighās* of land, she is receiving the half of it. It continued till the period of Mohammad Shah.¹³

An interesting aspect of the case is that when Bībī Maryam died sometime in Mohammad Shah’s period, the grant was transferred in the name of her daughter Bībī Shafiā including her children. It was done despite the fact that Bībī Maryam had, at least, one son Sheikh Mohammad or Muhāmid and a grandson Sheikh Mohammad. On the other hand, Bībī Shafiā herself had been a beneficiary of state largesse.¹⁴ Also, that when Sheikh Ahmad died, he had been receiving five *ṭankās* as *rozīnah* also that was later on transferred in the name of his son Sheikh Muhāmid/Mohammad. However it was not the same amount but only two *ṭankās* as *yaumiā* were approved. Later, his *yaumiā* was increased to two *ānnās*.¹⁵

⁹ Doc. 58, 76, 78, 79. Papers vary in dates suggesting that these were renewed from time to time by the *qāzī* or *faujdar*. Here copies of papers dated 15th, 46th, 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd RY are preserved in the collection for the grant in the form of *rozīnah* and *madad-i ma‘ash*.

¹⁰ Doc. 83.

¹¹ When the grant is meant for the entire family, *farzandān* is the word used even when names of daughters are also included.

¹² Doc. 4, 23, 58. Thirty *bighās* were not allotted contiguously; it was assigned at different locations of the same village.

¹³ Doc. 78. Paper is related to the year 1134 *hijrī*. *Madad-ī ma‘ash* grants were made hereditary by Aurangzeb in the last years of the seventeenth century. In principle, after the death of a male beneficiary, half of its size was transferred in the name of his widow.

¹⁴ Doc. 78, 80.

¹⁵ Doc. 83 (39th RY), 103 (46th RY). It was to be paid from the *mahsūl chabutrā kotwālī* of *qasbā* Raisin.

Bībī Shafiā’s name appears in various papers. Copy of a *farmān* from Aurangzeb’s period (21 Shawwal, 41st RY) indicates that Bībī Shafiā enjoyed sixty-seven (*shast o haft*) *bighās* land as *madad-ī ma‘ash* or *inām* in *mauzā* Nawābpur. The document is in dilapidated condition, but the script suggests the death of someone in the family, either her father Mullah Ahmad or her husband and she was extended help in the form of a land grant.¹⁶ At few places the size of land being “eighty-seven *bighās*” is mentioned in papers which are related to the reign of Bahadur Shah and Mohammad Shah. It gives the impression that it might have been increased.¹⁷ A document specific with the reign of Bahadur Shah also refers to two *ṭankās* as *yaumiā* to be paid from *sāir-i chabutrā kotwālī* of *parganā* Raisin. Size of her *madad-ī ma‘ash* was again increased to 107 *bighās* in 24th RY of Mohammad Shah.¹⁸

Another family in the same *parganā* that received grants from the state was of Mohammad Isa Jaunpuri and his wife Bībī Khadijā. Although there is no evidence in the form of a proper paper of grant indicating that the grant was made in the name of Bībī Khadijā, documents related to her two daughters Bībī Rahmatullah and Bībī Ismatullāh, and a granddaughter Bībī Noor are preserved. Interestingly, in a paper related to the *tarka* (inheritance) of some of the members of the family, Bībī Khadijā’s assets are mentioned separately. Here she is shown to have left twenty *bighās* of cultivable land “as per the *farmān*”.¹⁹ Bībī Rahamatullāh and Bībī Ismatullāh’s names are there in a grant which was jointly received in the name of Bībī Fātimā in *mauzā* Ghazi Kheri, *ṭappā* Ahamadpur, *sarkār* Ālamgīrpur. Of these, Bībī Rahmatullah’s paper of *tarka* specifically states that she had ten *bighās* of land in her name, most probably out of the combined grant made in the name of Bībī Fātimā.

Bībī Noor was the daughter of Sheikh Inayatullah, son of Sheikh Shamsuddin, son of Sheikh Isa Jaunpuri. She was married to Sheikh

¹⁶ Doc. 14, 74. In a few copies the size of land is 87 *bighās* also (Doc. 1, 14, 59, 74). Her husband’s name is not mentioned anywhere, although at various places there is reference to her children.

¹⁷ Doc. 59, 64.

¹⁸ Doc. 54, 55, 69.

¹⁹ Doc. 11.

Abdul Qavi, son of Pīr Mohammad, son of Sheikh Muhāmid who had been from “Pūrab”.²⁰ That could be one reason of this matrimonial alliance with the family of Sheikh Isa. Bībī Noor had two sons Mohammad Ahsan and Mohammad Akmal and four daughters. As these boys were facing hardships in their life after the death of their father Sheikh Abdul Qavi, they received forty *bighās* of land in Nawābpur village, *parganā* Raisin. It is interesting to note that Bībī Noor transferred her *warsa* (inheritance) amounting to Rs. 3,000, perhaps left by her husband in her name, to her sons – Ahsan and Akmal as *hiba*.²¹ The legal document is signed by many but the names deserve specific mention are of Syed Pir Mohammad – father-in-law of Bībī Noor; Sheikh Inayatullah – Bībī Noor’s father and Sheikh Shamsuddin – an uncle of hers. It implies that she had the support of her immediate family in this decision.²² Apart from this, two uncles and two aunts of Bībī Noor had bestowed a *havelī* in Raisin to Bībī Noor’s husband Sheikh Abdul Qavi as *hiba*.²³

An *iqrārnāmāh* (written agreement) is about one Bībī Zaibunnisā, daughter of Syed Azeemuddin and wife of Sheikh Sirajuddin. Her case is very unique. She had received 12 rupees *sāliyāna* (annual pension) as *tarka* (inheritance), but from whom it is not known. It could be the amount her husband had been receiving from the state. She also inherited forty *bighās* of land and a single storey house. She gave it to a girl (*musammāt*) Lutfullah, daughter of Sheikh Ameenuddin, whom she claimed as *dukhtar-ī latīfa o kinār*, claiming for having brought her up (*parwardah-ī man ast*). All these – *sāliyāna*, land and property – was given to Lutfullah as *hiba*.²⁴ This case proposes that annual allowance also had become hereditary like those of land grants and that could also

²⁰ *Mutawattin-ī Pūrab*.

²¹ Doc. 36, 66.

²² Earlier Bībī Noor’s grandfather Shamsuddin had transferred the ownership of a house in Raisin in her favour by passing his own sister Bībī Ismatullah who was alive after the death of her parents, two brothers and a sister. Doc. 22.

²³ Doc. 53. These were Najmuddin, Nuruddin, Bībī Ummatul Batul and Bībī Ummatullah. It was sometime during the period of Aurangzeb as one of the stamps bears the year as 1119 *hijrī*.

²⁴ Doc. 25.

be transferred to the next generation, even to an adopted child. In the same family is the case of Bībī Parsa, perhaps the daughter of Sheikh Sirajuddin (and Bībī Zaubunnisā), who received (rather inherited) two hundred *bighās* land as *madad-ī ma‘ash* that was in his (Sirajuddin’s) name. The relevant document belongs to Mohammad Shah’s period.²⁵

Of all these papers, two deeds are of immense importance as these are about *madad-ī ma‘ash* granted collectively in the name of one single woman but shared by other women of the extended family. One of the beneficiaries is Bībī Fātimā and the other is named Noor Jahan. In the 45th RY of Aurangzeb, Bībī Fātimā was assigned twenty *bighās* as *madad-ī ma‘ash* in *parganā* Raisin for her being needy.²⁶ Afterwards, an endowment in the form of a *nishān* from Prince Azam in the name of Bībī Fātimā,²⁷ is shared by seventy-two female members (*āsāmī*)²⁸ of the family, and the size of *madad-ī ma‘ash* in *parganā* Raisin (*sarkār Ālamgīrpur*) is 1,394 *bighās*. It carries the stamp of the *sadr* of Malwa Qasim Khan. On its reverse, names of all women sharing the grant and the size of their holdings are separately mentioned. It clearly suggests that the size of their holdings is not the same and varies from person to person. Subsequently, a request in this relation was made during the period of Bahadur Shah that since the grant is scattered (*qata ‘at-ī mutafriqa*) in various locations, they might be allowed to have it in one place, preferably in *parganā* Sironj. The last document in this series is a *rāzināmāh* (paper of consent) with the stamp of Qazi Syed Hamza of Ālamgīrpur with the signatures of *chaudhurīs*, *qānungos* and *muqaddam* of Ghazi Kheri, Tappa Ahmadpur – namely Deep Sahu, son of Bhupat, son of Sujan Sahu, to assign the entire land in one place.²⁹ In the last case, association of the family is established with Sheikh Jalal Chishti of Raisin, and Bībī Fātimā is mentioned as the immediate member of his family. Sheikh Jalal is identified with immense respect by the emperor, although the document is the copy of the original.

²⁵ Doc. 68.

²⁶ Doc. 49. This document is in the form of directions to *mutasaddis* of the *parganā* to locate the plot for her.

²⁷ Doc. 6.

²⁸ In document number 34 they are identified as *farzandān* and in 49 as Bībī Fātimā *vaghairah* (etc.).

²⁹ Doc. 50.

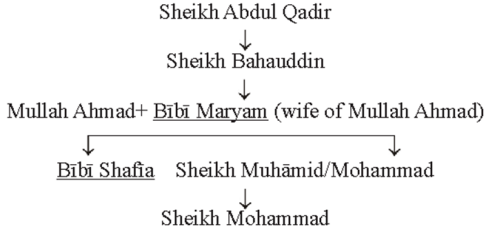
A collective grant measuring 340 *bighās*, in the name of Bībī Noor Jahan in accordance with a *nishān* of Prince Azam, is also worth mentioning. On its reverse, various names are inscribed. List of the names of female members are grouped in four or five, perhaps according to the seniormost member in the family. It also points towards the fact that all were related with each other but lived separately. Here too, size of plots assigned to each individual varies from ten *bighās* to a hundred. Some of the names mentioned elsewhere, like of Bībī Maryam, and Bībī Parsa are also among the beneficiaries as per the information contained in this document.

III

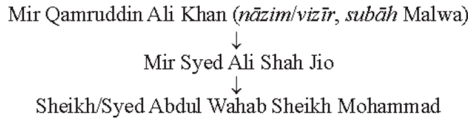
We can draw certain inferences from the details mentioned above. Generally widows of the erstwhile grantees of *madad-ī ma‘ash* either inherited the grants, but half of the total size received by their husbands. Somehow, those widows were also bestowed with land grants – *madad-ī ma‘ash* or *inām*, whose husbands had not been the beneficiary of the state largesse. There are indications that sometimes the size of grant was also increased (e.g. in case of Bībī Shafiā). A woman could get the land and monetary benefits transferred in the name of her daughter even while having male issues in the family (Bībī Maryam’s case is a clear example where her grant was transferred in favour of her daughter Bībī Shafiā). Sometimes daughters were bypassed in favour of sons by a mother, as was done in the case of Bībī Noor who transferred her assets to her sons although she had four daughters. They also enjoyed exclusive rights over these gains and after the death of a woman beneficiary, it was separately recorded in the form of her *tarka*. Most of the papers come down to the reign of the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah’s period. However, after Mohammad Shah, no paper of any kind in the form of *madad-ī ma‘ash*, *hiba* or *rozīnah*, or *sāliyāna* is found in this collection. It clearly points out towards the declining fortunes of the earstwhile beneficiaries along with the decline in power of the Mughal emperors. For the next century, we have many documents, but all in the form of dispute over property, or sale and purchase deeds. Unfortunately, names of women beneficiaries totally disappear from these documents. It makes it so obvious that under the Mughal rule, women received land grants and monetary benefits from the state frequently. So many names of women in a single *parganā*, as in one case seventy-two women beneficiaries’ names mentioned in one single document, give a clue to the number of women beneficiaries and size of land grants made exclusively to them in the Mughal Empire.

Appendix A
Names of Families that Appear Prominently in the Documents

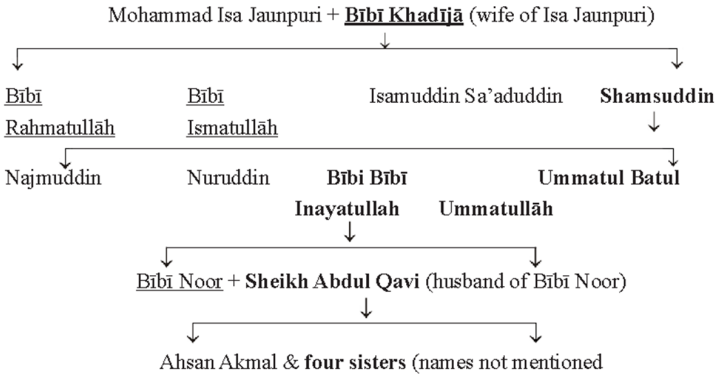
(1)



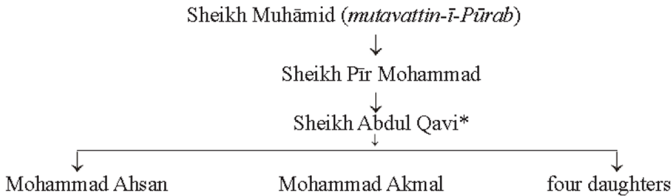
(2)



(3)



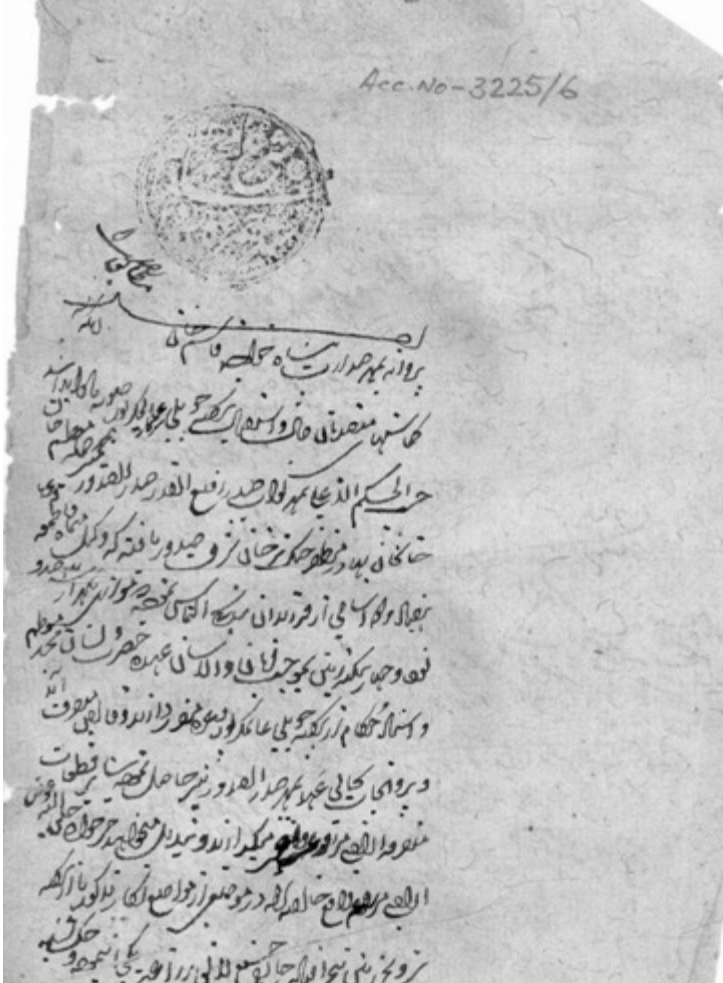
(4)



* Bibi Noor (mentioned in Sect. I), great granddaughter of Mohammad Isa Jaunpuri, was married to him.

Appendix B

Document (3225/6; Obverse) having the names of 72 women beneficiaries



Appendix C

Document (3225/6; Reverse) having the names of 72 women beneficiaries

Handwritten document in Persian script, likely a list of beneficiaries. The text is written in a cursive style and includes names and possibly amounts or descriptions. The document is aged and shows signs of wear, including some staining and fading. The text is organized into several sections, with some lines underlined or separated by horizontal lines. The names of the beneficiaries are written in a consistent format, often followed by a small number or identifier. The document is a reverse side of a page, as indicated by the caption.

Appendix D

Document Number 3325/6 (Reverse)

Translation of the document issued in the name of Bībī Fātimā along with the name of 71 others

Size of the land grant 1,394 *bighās*

Number of beneficiaries 72

From the *parganā* mentioned (*havelī* Ālamgīrpur)³⁰ from the *pargana*
Bairasia

1,294 *bigha*

100 *bigha*

Above-mentioned (*mushār ilaiha*)³¹....., etc.

According to the imperial mandate (*farmān-ī wālashān*) during the reign of the exalted one written on 9th (day), in the month of Muharram-al Harām, year 42nd (RY of Aurangzeb) in the said *parganā*

190 *bigha* 12 people (*āsāmī*)

Noorunnisa *mus.* Maryam *mus.* Ruqayya *mus.* Rabia *mus.* Hadya
25 *bigha* 25 *bigha* 25 *bigha* 15 *bigha* 15 *bigha*

mus. Bibi Shafiā *mus.* Bībī Gauhar *mus.* Aisha *mus.* Sidqa *mus.* Sajida
15 *bigha* 15 *bigha* 15 *bigha* 10 *bigha* 10 *bigha*

mus. Bībī Zainab *mus.* Zohra
10 *bigha* 10 *bigha*

***musammāt* Zohra, etc.** according to the *nishān* (order) of (Prince) Muhammad Azam

From the said *parganā* **26 persons**

Above-mentioned (*mushār ilaiha*).....etc.

According to the aforesaid *nishān* dated 21 Jamādi-us Sāni, 32nd (RY of Aurangzeb)

26 persons 590 *bighā*

Above-mentioned (*mu'mi ilaiha*) *mus.* Ummatullah *mus.* Asiya *mus.* Noorjahan

³⁰ It was assigned afresh in one place in Sironj. Earlier the grant of the same size was located in *parganā* Raisin but plots in the names of individuals were not contiguous. This document (3225/6) is about the relocation of the grant at one single place.

³¹ This grant is issued in the name of Bībī Fātimā.

<i>mus.</i> Hadya	<i>mus.</i> Khursheed	<i>mus.</i> Rabia	<i>mus.</i> Abida	<i>mus.</i> Badi’ a/Rabia
<i>mus.</i> Halima	<i>mus.</i> Zainab	<i>mus.</i> Hamida	<i>mus.</i> Farkhunda	
<i>mus.</i> Khajista	<i>mus.</i> Zahida	<i>mus.</i> Khadija	<i>mus.</i> Qasima	<i>mus.</i> Ātika
<i>mus.</i> Rāsti	<i>mus.</i> Hāfiza	<i>mus.</i> Gosain	<i>mus.</i> Rahima	<i>mus.</i> SalimKhatoon
<i>mus.</i> Munawwara			<i>mus.</i> Fehma	<i>mus.</i> Darya Khatoon ³²

musammāt Gul Bibi, etc. according to the aforesaid *nishān*, dated 7th Rabi-ul Awwal, 42nd RY

4 persons (asāmī) 200 *bighā*³³

Above-mentioned (<i>mushār ilaiha</i>)	<i>mus.</i> Rasti	<i>mus.</i> Rabia	<i>mus.</i> Raḥīa
50 <i>bigha</i>	50 <i>bigha</i>	50 <i>bigha</i>	50 <i>bigha</i>

Noorjahan, etc. according to the *nishān* of (Prince) Muhammad Azam, etc. from *parganā* Ālamgīrpur, etc.

614 *bighā*

Above-mentioned (*mushār ilaiha*)....., etc. according to the aforesaid (order) of Muhammad Azam, dated 26 Jamādi-us Sāni 49th (RY of Aurangzeb)

From the said *parganā*

5 people (asāmī) 209 *bighā*³⁴

Above-mentioned (<i>mu’mi ilaiha</i>)	<i>mus.</i> Ma’aruf	<i>mus.</i> Aisha	<i>mus.</i> Batoolmus.	<i>mus.</i> Nemat
59 <i>bigha</i>	50 <i>bigha</i>	25 <i>bigha</i>	25 <i>bigha</i>	50 <i>bigha</i>

musammāt Ishrat Bano, etc. according to the *nishān* of Rafi-ush Shan recorded on 24 Rajab 45th (RY of Aurangzeb)

10 persons (asāmī) 100 *bighā*

Above-mentioned (<i>mu’mi ilaiha</i>)	<i>mus.</i> Farkhunda	<i>mus.</i> Ismat Bano	<i>mus.</i> Hamida	
10 <i>bigha</i>	10 <i>bigha</i>	10 <i>bigha</i>	10 <i>bigha</i>	
<i>mus.</i> Rashida	<i>mus.</i> Zohra Bano	<i>mus.</i> Sahiba Bano	<i>mus.</i> Taj Bano	<i>mus.</i> Habiba Bano
10 <i>bigha</i>	10 <i>bigha</i>	10 <i>bigha</i>	10 <i>bigha</i>	10 <i>bigha</i>

³² Size of land grant against the names of these twenty-six persons is not mentioned in the original document.

³³ This is a portion of the grant of 590 *bighās* mentioned above.

³⁴ Out of above-mentioned 614 *bighā* land, 209 *bighās* was meant for five persons. Rest of it is distributed among ten persons mentioned immediately below it.

mus. Bano

10 *bigha*

Musammāt Parsa, etc. according to the *parwānā* (issued) during the period of Badshah Quli Khan, *faujdar*, dated 25 Jamadi-ulAwwal, 50th (RY of Aurangzeb) from the aforesaid *parganā*

9 persons (asāmī) 205 *bighā*

Above-mentioned (<i>mu'mi ilaiha</i>)	<i>mus.</i> Maryam	<i>mus.</i> Hamida Bibi	<i>mus.</i> Sajida
30 <i>bigha</i>	25 <i>bigha</i>	25 <i>bigha</i>	25 <i>bigha</i>

<i>mus.</i> Saleha	<i>mus.</i> Makhdooma	<i>mus.</i> Hanifa	<i>mus.</i> Ma'ruf	<i>mus.</i> Roshni
25 <i>bigha</i>	20 <i>bigha</i>	20 <i>bigha</i>	20 <i>bigha</i>	15 <i>bigha</i>

Bībī Maryam, etc. according to the *parwānā* (issued) during the period of Muhammad Ali *faujdar*, dated 15 Rabi-ul Awwal, 3rd (Regnal ?) year (of ?) *parganā* Bairasia.....

6 persons (asāmī) 100 bighā³⁵

Above-mentioned (<i>musammāt ilaiha</i>)	<i>mus.</i> Khajista	<i>mus.</i> Mubarak	<i>mus.</i> Batool
20 <i>bigha</i>	20 <i>bigha</i>	20 <i>bigha</i>	15 <i>bigha</i>

<i>mus.</i> Bibi Nemat	<i>mus.</i> Bibi Jamal Khatoon
15 <i>bigha</i>	10 <i>bigha</i>

³⁵ This chunk of 100 *bighās* of land was located in a different *parganā* called Bairasia.

Shāh Jahān-Nāmā

Imperial Views of History

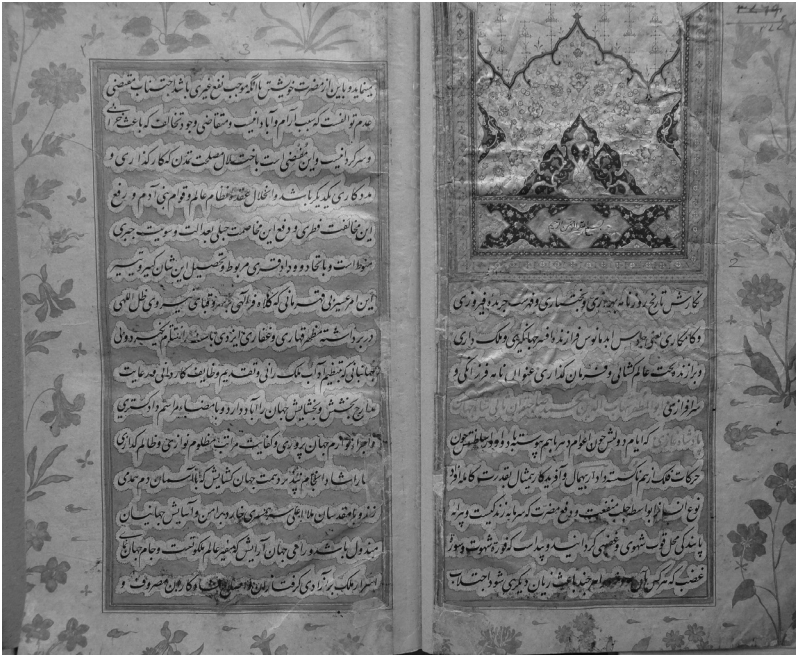
Gulfishan Khan

Abstract: The article seeks to present overviews of a hitherto unutilized Persian manuscript, History 309, containing 944 folios, composed in 1645 at Akbarabad (Agra), the seat of caliphate. It is preserved in the library of Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad (Telangana). A close perusal of the manuscript shows that it is the first of the three volumes of *Bādshāhnāmā* of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Hamīd Lāhorī, the official historian of the Mughal Emperor Shāh Jahān’s reign (r. 1628-58).

The present manuscript documents only the first of the three decades (from 1037 to 1047 AH /1628-38 CE) of his magnificent reign. It is written in strict chronological order and describes multitude of events from official perspective. It portrays the emperor as a multifaceted genius. It describes the bureaucracy and officials of the empire and their multifarious roles in the expansion and consolidation of the dynamic Mughal state. Mughal aggression in the Deccan is also a major concern of the author. It provides details of various aspects of Mughal foreign policy with regard to Central Asia and Iran. It is absolutely an essential document to study emperor’s fondness for architectural patronage especially the stages of the construction of Rauzah-ī-Munawwarā (the illumined tomb) called Taj Mahal today.

I

Shāh Jahān-Nāmā (Book of Shah Jahan) is one of the major historical works about the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan’s reign (r. 1628-58), preserved in the library of Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad (Telangana). The present manuscript History 309, containing 944 folios, documents only the first of the three decades (from 1037 to 1047 AH /1628-38 CE) of what has been considered the most glorious epoch in the annals of the



history of the pre-modern South Asia.¹ As befitting the official history of Shah Jahan's royal reign the paper itself carries sheen of gold and the headings throughout made out of pure gold. The manuscript is an excellent specimen of *nastaliq* form of calligraphy practised under the Mughal court's patronage. A colophon on the last page of the volume states that the manuscript was presented to the Emperor Shah Jahan on 14 Ziḡadah 1054 AH/2 January 1645 at Akbarabad (Agra), the seat of caliphate. A close perusal of the manuscript shows that the present manuscript is the first of the three volumes of *Bādshāhnāmā* of Shaikh 'Abd al-Hamīd Lāhorī (d.1654), the official historian of Shah Jahan.² Another marvellous manuscript covering the first decade of the reign of Shah Jahan, lavishly illustrated with forty-four full page paintings, copied by Muhammad Amin al-Mashhadi in 1656-57, is preserved in the Windsor Castle Library (London). Its superb narrative paintings reflect

¹ Saxena, 1932, *History of Shahjahan of Delhi*.

² 'Abd al-Hamīd Lāhorī, 1867-68, *Bādshāhnāmā*. For a general survey of the major histories and historians of Shah Jahan's reign see, Hosain, 1941, "Contemporary Historians during the Reign of Emperor Shah Jahan".

the glory of the reign. The emperor is portrayed in full imperial majesty in the midst of his noblemen reflecting his high stature and taste.³ But the present manuscript contains no illustrations.

It is to be noted that Mirza Jalala Tabatabai (d.1636), an consummate scholar, was the first court chronicler of Shah Jahan. His excellent prose narrative covers only five years of the brilliant reign beginning with the fifth solar regnal year to the end of the eighth. It remained in manuscript form until late Yunus Jafari brought out an excellent edition.⁴ Muhammad Amin bin Abul Qasim Qazwini (1646), an outstanding prose writer and excellent narrator, was the second official historian whom the emperor appointed as his official historiographer in 1636. He composed a history of first ten years of the same magnificent era. The literary outcome of Qazwini's painstaking and beautiful penmanship is also called *Bādshāhnāmā*, a name decided upon by the emperor himself.⁵ Shaikh 'Abd al-Hamīd Lāhorī, a historian trained in the Abul Fazl School of penmanship (*Insha*) and historiography, an accomplished historian and an elegant prose writer, was the successor of the above-mentioned distinguished literary figures. The standard text of Shaikh Lāhorī's *Bādshāhnāmā* is divided into three volumes, the third was completed by his pupil Muḥammad Wāris (d.1680). Each volume describes a decade of his rule. Each decade was to be treated as a separate volume, because ten was considered auspicious by the Emperor who was also the tenth Timūrīd ruler. Consequently *Bādshāhnāmā* or *Shāhjahān-nāmā* is also called *Tārīkh-ī-Shāhjahānī Dahsala*, i.e. History of Shāhjahānī Decades. An abridged version (*mulakhkha*) of the three volumes of Lāhorī's official history was prepared by Muhammad Tahir Ashna aka Inayat Khan, the royal librarian of Shah Jahan.⁶ There also exist three versified versions

³ Windsor Castle Royal Library, MS HB.149. Beach, Koch and Thackston, 1997, *King of the World*.

⁴ British Library MS Or. 1676, Jafari (ed.), 2009, *Shah Jahan-Nama*.

⁵ Qazwini, *Padshahnama/Badshshnama* British Library MS Or. 173. For an analysis cf. Stephan, 2015, "The Rhetoric of Qazwini's History of Shah Jahan".

⁶ Jameel-ur-Rahman (ed.), 2009, *Mulakhkhas-e-Shahjahan-nameh*, p. 535. For an English translation, see Begley and Desai, 1990, *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan*.

of *Bādshāhnāmā/Badshshnama* both the terms literally mean “Chronicle of the king”, though incomplete, all commissioned by the emperor, composed by the court poets. Haji Muhammad Jan Mashhadi Qudsi (d.1646) was entrusted with the task of the versification of *Bādshāhnāmā* and for the purpose he was sent to the peaceful and serene Kashmir Valley (*Zafarnama-i-Shahjahan* of Muhammad Jan Qudsi Mashhadi, British Library MS Ethe 1552). Two other versified accounts of the reign both called *Bādshāhnāmā* were composed by the poet-laureate Abu Talib Kalim Kashani (d. 1652) (British Library MS Ethe 1570) and Mir Muhammad Yahya Kashi (British Library MS Or. 1852). Unfortunately most of these priceless literary treasures remain unedited to date which otherwise would have brightened many unread pages of Indian history.⁷

Being a formal official chronicle the narrative is full of hyperbolic praise for the patron-emperor. The author effectively portrays the complex personality of the suave and urbane emperor of India, as well as the many-sided character of his reign. The emperor is portrayed as a multifaceted genius who oversaw every state activity from production of historical narrative to organizing a military campaign. Despite the employment of effusive (demonstrative) prose and hyperbole, the author successfully conveys zeitgeist, the true spirit of the Shāhjahānī era. The language is ornate, but lucid. It contains a number of indigenous terms such as *jharokhā darśana*, *parchinkārī* (inlay work, pietra dura), *phūlakaṭāra* (dagger), *cauka* (plaza, square, open court), *caukīdāra* (mounted guards), *baṅglā* and *cabūtarā* (square, raised platform) which were gradually assimilated in the emerging Indo-Persian language. The author cites verses from the poetry of the Persian poet-moralist Sadi, the lyricist Shamsuddin Muhammad Hafiz of Shiraz (1315-90), and the classic Persian poets Anwari and Khaqani. But more often it provides quotations from the poetics of the court poet Abu Talib Kalim Kashani especially the verses in which the poet celebrates monumental architecture, cosmopolitan nature of the city, busy marketplace and luxuriant gardens of the Mughal Agra, the riverfront garden city and the

⁷ Ansari, 1961, *Hyat wa Tasnifat Mirza Abu Talib Kalim Hamadani*. Thackston’s unpublished dissertation of 1974 is a valuable source on the poet.

brilliant capital of the empire.⁸ It refers to the earlier autobiographies like *Baburnāmā* and *Jahāngīrnāmā*, the elegant memoirs of the emperors Babur (1483–1530) and Jahangir (1569–1627), *Māsir-ī-Jahāngīrī* of Khwaja Kamgar Husaini (d.1640) and *Zafarnāmā* of Mulla Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, the history of illustrious ancestor and the great Central Asian empire-builder Timūr (d. 1405).

Being the official history the text presents an image that the emperor desired to communicate of himself and that of the vast empire of Hindustan which extended from Kabul in the present-day Afghanistan to Aurangabad, and from the Arabian Sea to the Gulf of Bengal. The emperor was fully aware of the uniqueness and greatness of his reign. Therefore, he saw to it that every deed and event of his reign was to be set down in elaborate details for the posterity. He made all possible efforts to create official documentation of his reign so that generation to come would know him and his kingdom. His brain honed by some of the most well-read minds of the era clearly understood the role of historiography as a powerful tool to propagate imperial ideology.

II

The work begins with the accession (*julus*) of Shah Jahan to the imperial throne. Prince (Shah) Khurram (1592–1666) (means, joyous), son and successor of the Emperor Nuruddin Jahangir (r. 1605-27), ascended the Mughal throne on 8 Jumada al-sani 1037/Monday, 14 February 1628, with the lofty title Abul Muzaffar Shihab al-Din Muhammad Sahib Qiran-i-Sani Shahjahan Padshah Ghazi, “Father of Victory, Star of Religion, Lord of the Auspicious Planetary Conjunction, King of the World, Emperor, Warrior of the Faith”. The public ceremony took place in the *dīwān-ī-ām*, (the Hall of Public Audience) in the royal citadel of Akbarabad consisting of the grandees, ministers and the distinguished men of sword and pen (*arbāb-ī-saif wā qalam*) of the realm, amidst singers reciting melodious *ghazals*. Poets and men of letters composed felicitous chronograms and were richly rewarded. The author Shaikh ‘Abd al-Hamīd Lāhorī noted that the numerical value of the phrases “Shah Jahan, the Warrior King, May God Protect and Preserve him” (*shāhjahān pādshāh ghāzī sallāmahu allāh wa abqah*) and “Shihabuddin

⁸ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folio 889.

Muhammad, the Second Lord of Auspicious Conjunction” (*Shihab al-din Sahib Qiran-i-sani*) are equivalent to the numerical value of the Quranic verse (S.2, verse 30) “Verily I shall install a caliph on this earth (*inni jailuna fi al arz khalifa*). Hakim Rukna Kashi whose poetic name was “Masih” composed following hemistich as the chronogram of the auspicious coronation: Remain in this world as long as the world endures (*dar jahān bad ta jahān bashad* +1037). The incomparable poet Saida Gilani aka Bebadal Khan said thus: “May the accession of Shah Jahan be the ornament of the nation and religion.” Others also discovered dates of the phrases: Ornament of the religious law (*zeb-i-sharia*). “God gave the right to the deserving” (*khuda haq ba haqdar dad*). Monday the 25 of Bahman (*shanba bist i panjam-i-bahman* +1037). However, an account of the illustrious ancestors of the emperor as narrated in the introduction of the first volume of the final version of Lāhorī and Qazwini is excluded from the present version.⁹

The Preface also contains emperor’s horoscope (*zaicha*) drawn by Mulla Fariduddin Masud ibn Ibrahim Dehlawi (d.1629), the Astronomer Royal and the author of *Zich-i-Shahjahani* (the Tables of Shahjahan).¹⁰ The detailed enumeration of the royal horoscope is followed with the text of the royal order *farmān* dated 1037 AH/1628, addressed to Abul Hasan Asaf Khan (d. 1641) father-in-law of the emperor, now exalted with the dignified titles of Yaminuddaula (Right Hand of the Empire) and addressed affectionately as “Ummu” (uncle) in addition to the above dignified titles. The royal order proclaims his appointment to the position of *Wakil us saltanat* the highest office in the Mughal government, with the official rank called *mansab* of 8,000/8,000 *zat* (personal status, pay) and *sawār* (mounted troopers), along with the *du aspa sih aspa*, and an additional grant of the port city of Lahri Bandar.¹¹ The emperor wrote with his own hands:

God the Almighty, with His infinite bounteousness blessed us with the sovereignty of entire Hindustan (*badshahi kul Hindustan*) and in this

⁹ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folios 1-20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, folios 21-42.

¹¹ For an exposition of the *mansabdārī* system with its dual awards and obligations, i.e. the *zat* and *sawār* ranks, see Athar Ali, 1985, *The Apparatus of the Empire*, cf. Introduction.

eternal kingdom I deem you a partner. Every day, new territories would be added through conquests, fresh victories and outright annexations which would enhance the prosperity and power of the exalted court (*auliya-i-daulat*).¹²

Other prominent nobles mentioned in the coronation list are Mahabat Khan (d. 1634), given the title of *Khān-ī-Khānan* and Commander-in-Chief of the army (*sipahsālār*) and awarded the *mansab* rank of 7,000 along with a bequest of one hundred thousand (one lakh) of rupees. Other *mansabdār* nobles who got high profile ministries of the empire with promotions in their ranks were as follows: Khan-i-Alam, Qasim Khan Juwaini, Lashkar Khan Mashhadi, Wazir Khan, Sayyid Muzaffar Khan, Mirza Khan, Diler Khan Barha, Bahadur Khan Rohilla, Mirza Muzaffar Kirmani, Raja Bharat Bundela, Mustafa Beg, Sardar Khan, Raja Bithaldas son of Raja Gopaldas, Bahadur Singh Bundela and Safdar Khan. Raja Gaj Singh, son of Suraj Singh, son of a maternal aunt (*khālā*) of the emperor arrived in the capital, from his own country Jodhpur known as Marwar. On this occasion the emperor “father of kings” awarded him a *mansab* of five thousand *zat* and *sawār* and robes of honour (*khilat khasa*) and jewelled dagger with *phūlakatāra* and a jewelled sword, drum, standard (*alam* and *naqqārā*) horses and elephants.¹³

Shaikh Hasan, son of the well-known doctor and surgeon Shaikh Bina who saved emperor Akbar’s (r.1556–1605) life in 1596, given the title of Muqarrab Khan by Jahangir, was bestowed revenue-exempted land grant called *suyurghal* yielding an annual income of one hundred thousand rupees, in the qasba of Kairana, his home town in the Muzaffar Nagar district of the Delhi province. Abdus Salam Mashhadi got the title of Islam Khan and rank of 4,000/2,000 and was promoted to the high position of second *Bakhshī* (in-charge of *mansabs* and intelligence), and also Reviser of Petitions (*arz-i-mukarrar*). Mulla Murshid Shirazi became *dīwān-ī-buyutat* (Imperial Steward) with the title of Makramat Khan and got handsome robes of honour (*khilat*) and rank of a thousand *zat* and 2000 *sawār*. On the same auspicious occasion the annual income of Hakim Ruknai was fixed at Rupees 24,000 per annum.¹⁴ Hakim Abul

¹² *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folios 42-43.

¹³ *Ibid.*, folio 101.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, folio 105.

Qasim Gilani got the high sounding title Hakimul Mulk and *mansab* of 2,000/1,000 and robes of honour. Biharidas Kachwaha got the *mansab* of 1,500/1,000, while Sayyid Shujat Ali Khan Barha was awarded 4,000/4,000 and governorship of Allahabad.¹⁵

Most significantly perhaps the work contains a detailed listing of the offerings, honour and promotions of the nobles who occupied various political, military, administrative and diplomatic positions in the vast bureaucratic apparatus of the empire. The work constitutes an important source for the reconstruction of the careers of the Mughal administrative elite, as it depicts personal and collective trajectories of those whose fortunes were bound with the empire. It contains the most comprehensive information of the high profile nobles such as Asaf Khan down to many lesser known officials of the state.

Mulla Shukrullah Shirazi, also called Allami Afzal Khan, a distinguished administrator-scholar from the abode of learning Shiraz, endowed with virtues temporal and spiritual, arrived in India early in his youth and rendered loyal services to the emperor. He was promoted to the *mansab* rank of 4,000/2000 *sawār* and was assigned the same office of Imperial Steward (Mir Saman) that he held in the close of the reign of the late emperor Jahangir along with handsome robes of honour (*khilat*), jewelled sword, horses and elephants.¹⁶ On the following day 29 February 1628, Afzal Khan who had previously served as His Majesty's own minister (*dīwān-ī-kul*) arrived from the capital of Lahore and had the honour of making obeisance. Owing to the transfer of Iradat Khan, the office of the Prime Minister (*dīwān-ī-alā*) was now entrusted to Allami Afzal Khan. And his *mansab* rank was deservedly fixed at 5,000 comprising the basic pay and the increment. The chronogram of appointment was obtained from the hemistich: Plato became the Minister of Alexander *shud falatun wazir-isikandar* ++ 1038/1628-29. Later in the eleventh regnal year his *mansab* was raised to 7,000. Afzal Khan died at Lahore, in Ramazan 1048 AH/17 January 1639. He is lying buried in his tomb on the left bank of Jamuna between the tomb of Itimaduddaula

¹⁵ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folios 42-53.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, folio 105.

and Taj Mahal, known as Chini ka Rauza. His brother Abdul Haq aka Amanat Khan was the distinguished calligrapher of Taj. Both the brothers received high education in their native town Shiraz, the centre of learning and scholarship.

Promotions and bequests made to the imperial family are most diligently recorded. Rabiul Awwal 1047 Hijri (August 1637) the lunar weighing of His Majesty was held in celebration of the completing forty-eight years of his life. On this occasion the *mansab* of his Royal Highness Prince Dara Shikoh who held the *mansab* of 12,000/8,000 was fixed at 15,000 *zat* with 9,000 *sawār*. The *mansabs* of the Princes Muhammad Shah Shuja Bahadur and Muhammad Aurangzeb Bahadur by an increase of 2,000 and 1,000 were each raised to 12,000 *zat* with 7000 *sawār*.¹⁷

It noted the formal royal visits of the emperor to the mansions (*manzil*) of his grantees, such as that of Asaf Khan and Jafar Khan, where the emperor was sumptuously entertained along with his family. It carefully recorded the births and deaths of children and grandchildren in the imperial household, illness and death of the important nobles of the empire such as the sad news of the death Mir Jumla, *Mīr Bakshī* (Head of Personnel) due to paralysis¹⁸ and of Mahabat Khan in 1634, and the sudden demise of Turanian envoy Khwaja Abdur Rahim.¹⁹

III

The work provides authentic descriptions of various aspects of court culture under Shah Jahan. It contains meticulous literary representations of the royal court, with very minute portrayals of details of the formalities observed at the Shah Jahani court. The work unfolds a rich spectacle of the reign by bringing to life the splendour and magnificence of the court. It provides panoramic views of Shah Jahan's *darbār* settings, royal audiences with nobles, foreign travellers and ambassadors, all full of pageantry and an integral part of court life. Most of all, it provides rare glimpses into the lives of the ruler and his family. Arranged chronologically within the text are detailed accounts of virtually every important public activity of the emperor, from undertaking an important

¹⁷ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folios 896-97.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, folio 898.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, folio 130.

military campaign to the valuable offerings sent such as a chandellier (*qandil*) to the Rauza of the Holy Prophet. It describes the carefully choreographed royal audiences at which the emperor announced major promotions and appointments, especially on the occasion of the annual *nauroz* (new day) and the weighing against gold on the occasion of royal birthdays according to both solar and lunar calendars and the great public displays at the time of marriages of the princes. Therefore, a major part of the text describes various public events at the court and elaborates court ceremonials. It provides a graphic description of the splendid receptions in the *dīwān-ī-ām* and on the special days marked out by the court for special rejoicings such as the anniversary of emperor's birthday, recovery of emperor from illness, reception of an envoy. It describes innumerable royal audiences at which the emperor received homage of the assembled nobles and aristocrats of his realm, who stood in the order of precedence. The splendour and pageantry of court comes to life especially in the wedding ceremonies of the four sons of the emperor. The author successfully conveys monumentality and splendour of royal the imperial court mainly due to painstaking concern for details.

In the month of 1045 Hijri (1636) the metropolis of Akbarābād was graced by the entry of royal standards. The world-protecting-monarch started from the Bāgh-ī-Nūr Manzil on a mountain-like swift speed elephant and entered the Palace with thousands of auspiciousness. He took seat in the *iwān* called *makān ī-khās wa ām* Hall of Public Audience. The Hall was decorated like heavens for the celebration of the weighing ceremony on the occasion of completion of forty-six solar years of His Majesty's eternal age. The emperor sat on the monarchical seat of his heaven like throne commonly called *takht-ī murassā*, i.e. the jewelled throne.²⁰

Persian was the language of court administration and belles-lettres and the emperor usually conversed in Persian with remarkable eloquence and fluency but sometimes he also spoke in Hindi with those who were unable to speak Persian language, but had little inclination for Turkish, his hereditary language. Language is the identity of a population and this respect for language was naturally ingrained in the emperor. The royal preference for Hindi seems to be the natural influence of the emperor's

²⁰ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folio 856.

mother Jagat Gosain, daughter of Mota Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur in the Marwar state. He had a fondness for Hindustānī music (*musiqī-ī-Hind*) too, and understood the subtleties of what should be considered one of the most abstruse of the rational subjects. Before retiring for the night he listened to Hindustānī music.

Shaikh ‘Abd al-Hamīd Lāhorī sought to project his patron emperor as an enlightened monarch as well as a devoted husband and a caring father. The emperor dedicated every precious moment of his life to the maintenance of justice and peace throughout his realm.

His Majesty often says that it is a pity to waste in sleep of negligence as many unthankful, imprudent and self-indulgent persons do the time which can better be spent in administering justice, nourishing people, performing urgent affairs of the world, granting requests to the poor, storing up the means of God’s pleasure, and maintenance the affairs of sovereignty.²¹

Subject Matter

The volume represents not only a saga of the pomp and splendour rather it also shows a genuine concern for the common populace of the empire as is evident in the description of the famine in Deccan and Gujarat in 1630-32. Similarly, it describes flood relief measures undertaken in Thatta, and special prayers offered by the emperor and nobles to stave off the calamity in the face of oncoming draught in the regions around the capital. It is reported that Lord did hear as soon after the lands were graced with rains. Besides, the manuscript provides wide-ranging information on Mughal court’s international contacts, as well as political developments in other parts of the empire, mainly the Deccan called *junubi mamalik*, i.e. the southern states, and Kabul and Kashmir. Additionally, the invaluable volume contains transcripts of royal decrees and documents, copies of letters exchanged with ambassadors and regional Indian and foreign heads of the state. It provides views of the Central Asian policy of the Emperor Shah Jahan, relations with the Astarkhanid rulers Nazr Muhammad Khan and Imam Quli Khan (1611-41), called Wali, internal

²¹ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folio 95.

conditions of Transoxiana called Turan, unsuccessful siege of Kabul by Nazr Muhammad Khan (June-August 1628), and the defensive measures undertaken by Lashkar Khan, the Mughal governor of the province, and Hakim Haziq Gilani's ambassadorial mission to the court of Bukhara in November 1628.²² Nevertheless relations with Persia occupies prominent place, and the author describes reception of Persian ambassador Bahri Beg by Mutamid Khan. Notice of the death of Shah Abbas (r. 1587–1629) on 9 January 1629 is accompanied with a detailed obituary describing Persian monarch's rise to power and his major military conquests. It describes internal conditions of the Safavid Empire, mainly the political instability of Persia after the death of Shah Abbas I, followed with the event of accession of Shah Safi (r. 1629-42). Significantly, the detailed narrative of the Mughal foreign relations especially with Persia and Central Asia called "Iran wa Turan" also represents rulers' view of their mutual relationship.²³ Although the wars and conquests received marginal treatment in this volume, nevertheless important military campaigns and political events are dealt in ample details. The incessant military activities in Deccan, siege of Parenda by Azam Khan, capture of the fort of Qandhar in 1631, internal politics of Nizamshahi kingdom of Ahmadnagar and its extinction, disgraceful role of Fath Khan, death of Ibrahim Adil Khan of Bijapur, campaign against Bijapur, conquest of Daulatabad (1633) under the generalship of Mahabat Khan, peace treaty with Muhammad Adilshah of Bijapur and Abdullah Qutubshah, the ruler of Golkunda in the year 1636 are dealt with copious details. Even the revolts of nobles and local chiefs which are interpreted as a debilitating factor on the strength of otherwise powerful empire are discussed in more than satisfactory manner. Obviously the rebels were denounced as enemies of peace and concord. Such are the descriptions of the rebellion of Jujhar Singh, the Bundela chief, and the revolt of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi. It contains reports submitted by the *waqainawis* (news writers) of various provinces of the empire. It narrates graphically the siege of Hugli and consequent destruction of the Portuguese settlement, conquest of Lower Tibet by Zafar Khan, the governor of Kashmir, accompanied with an

²² *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folios 181-85.

²³ Islam, 1970, *Indo-Persian Relations*.

interesting account of Tibet's topography and the main industrial and agricultural products.²⁴

Architecture

While other arts and letters also flourished under Shah Jahan's patronage his most outstanding and enduring artistic achievement belongs to the realm of architecture. Architecture the imperial art par excellence remained the focus of emperor's attention and the best known aspect of his patronage. Along with the portrayal of the opulent splendour of Shāhjahānī court, the author provides fascinating descriptions of the imperial buildings and majestic grandeur of his numerous architectural monuments. Shah Jahan's reign represented an era of great architectural awareness too, when designing and construction of new buildings were fashion at the court.²⁵ The author provides extensive details of imperial architectural projects for the future historians of architecture in the most absorbing manner. His work contains the most exact details about the planning, designing (*tarh*), ground-plan and the layout of most of the royal monuments. It provides a fascinating description of the Agra Fort Complex, the three main palace courtyards built by the emperor in the opening decade of his reign, i.e. 1628-37 CE, the main imperial residence until 1648 when he moved to the court of his new capital in Delhi. It contains rich profiles of all the royal monuments secular as well as religious buildings which had been completed in the first decade of the imperial rule. However, among the royal monuments of the capital city it does not refer to the construction of Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque), made of the translucent marble, which was completed in 1063/1653. However, the Jami Masjid, the congregational mosque of the capital (completed in 1647), for which the work of construction began in 1637 is mentioned as a project sponsored by the Princess Jahanara.

The author represented the Shāhjahānī buildings as a unique blend of elegance and architecture. *Shāh Jahān-Nāmā* contains precise details of the measurement of the various buildings, as well as the material used in the construction such as the dazzling white marble (*saṅg-ī-mar mar*),

²⁴ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folios 901-09.

²⁵ Koch, 2006, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra*.

red stone (*saṅg-ī-surkh*), *chunah chunah patiali* (quicklime), the precious or semi-precious stones, pearls, red gems (*aqīq wa marjan*), as well as the exact figures of the expenditure involved in construction. It refers to the new innovative decoration techniques *sanat-ī-ayina kārī* (mosaic work), *munabbatkārī* (stone relief work), *parchinkārī* (stone intarsia) and *girahbandi* (geometrical ornamentation).

It graphically portrays the newly completed *dīwān-ī-ām*, the heart of the palace called *dawlat khānā khāss u ām* (palace building for the special one and for the wider public), commonly referred as *dīwān-ī-ām* (Hall of Public Audience) where the emperor held the court twice a day and personally attended the administration of the empire. The emperor remained prodigiously busy with large-scale building projects. Shahjahan made the personal overseeing of his artists as part of his daily routine thus acting as his own artistic director in a manner typical of Shāhjahānī perfectionism. Emperor's daily morning session with his artists in the *dawlat khānā-ī-khāss wa ām*, also included the close inspection of the work of his artists and architects. The emperor is invariably referred as *daqiqah-shinas* meaning subtleties-knowing emperor and one who had a vision of an alchemist (*nazr kimiya asr*, literally, eyes effective like that an alchemist), and one difficult to please.

And part of the precious time he spends in careful examination of the masterpieces of artists (*karnamhai-yi-i-sanatgran*) with magical skills such as the lapidaries (*murassakar*), enamellers (*minakar*), gold smiths (*zargar*), etc. The superintendents of the imperial buildings (*daroghahai-i-kargah-i-imarati-khassa*) together with the masterful architects of excellent abilities and rare qualities (*mimaran-i-shigarfkar nadirah-i-asar*) present the architectural designs (*tarha-yi-imarati*) before the exalted sight of the emperor. And since his most pure intellect, illustrious like the sun, pays meticulous attention to the planning and construction of lofty edifices and strong buildings (*imarati*), which, in accordance with the saying “Verily our monuments will tell of us – long speak with mute eloquence of His Majesty's God-given high aspirations and sublime fortune, and for ages to come are memorials to his abiding love of land development, urban planning, constructiveness (*abadgiri*), spreading of ornamentation (*zinat gustari*), and nourishing of purity (*nuzahat parwari*). Most of the buildings are

delicately designed. And on the ingenious plans prepared by the skilful architects after long consideration he makes appropriate alterations and emendations, thus setting the great vogue of this lofty art of building construction [throughout the empire].²⁶

In the flourishing courtly artistic tradition the sub-imperial patronage also occupied an equally significant position. Detailed descriptions of the royal monuments, secular as well as religious buildings and gardens in this official history compiled under the direct imperial supervision reinforce the Mughal sovereign's intimate concern in the art of building. The elegant imperial taste promulgated by the emperor was widely emulated by the nobility whose taste often echoed that of the emperor. The emperor was not only a trendsetter, he was also an embodiment of high culture and the leading arbiter of taste of his time. His noble administrators, majority of them being the men of creative imagination, sought to imitate their royal-patron thus resulting in a large-scale sub-imperial sponsorship across the country. Some of the premier nobles and administrator-architects such as the Finance Minister Allami Afzal Khan, Asaf Khan (d.1641), Wazir Khan Mukaramat Khan and Amanat Khan played crucial roles in the materialization of the vast imperial architectural programme. Many of the prominent nobles built their own mansions surrounded with beautiful gardens (a trademark of Mughal architecture) as well as buildings of public utility throughout the empire. Some of them built and owned not one but two mansions in the twin Mughal capital cities, Agra and Lahore, despite the existence of the threatening law of escheat. Economic historians would not dispute that Shah Jahan's bureaucracy had enough capital at their disposal to give expression to their innermost natural desire to leave a permanent imprint on time and space. Perhaps, the dynamic imperial patron's encouragement to nobility to embellish cities, construct serais, gardens and dwellings and endow shrines remains the concrete manifestations of a prosperous state.

A number of nobles and officials of the state were employed in the planning and realization of the imperial architectural enterprises mainly as the superintendents (*sarkārs*). Asaf Khan, the premier noble of the empire, was also a gentleman architect, well versed in the subtleties of this craft (*sanat*). "Yaminuddaula knows the intricacies of the craft." He acted

²⁶ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folios 87-88.

as a close advisor of the emperor on most of the architectural projects. The foremost noble's architectural patronage included supervision, sponsorship as well as designing of various building projects.

And each of the finally approved design (*tarh*) is submitted to that strong pillar of the state and firm arm of sovereignty Yaminuddaula Asaf Khan who writes down the explanation of the imperial instructions which ultimately serve as a guide (*dastāwez*) for the building overseers (*mutasaddiyan*) and architects of buildings. In this peaceful reign, the art of building has reached such a point that it astonishes the widely-travelled connoisseurs and undoubtedly is a source of envy of the engineers (*muhandisan*) of this incomparable craft.²⁷

Shāh Jahān-Nāmā is shrouded in an atmosphere of sadness and gloom due to the death of Arjumand Bano, daughter of Asaf Khan, born to be a legend, known to history as Mumtaz Mahal, in child-birth at Burhanpur on the night of Wednesday, 17 Zilqadah 1040 AH/16 June 1631, only three years after the accession of her husband to the ancestral throne. It describes annual *urs*, the gathering on the anniversary of death on the site selected for her burial, and distribution of charities by the emperor. Despite the opulence of the narrative and all encompassing grandeur of Mughal life and courts there is a persistent undercurrent of sadness in every proceedings. This sadness perhaps is a mere figment of the bleakness surrounding the emperor's private life. The lost love and desperation might have been the driving force which spawned a rainbow of events all celebrating joy but having their true source in tragedy.

On Tuesday the 17 of Zilqadah 1046/1638 which is the day of the demise of Her Majesty the Most High Cradle (*Mahd-i-Ulya*) the chosen one of the age, (*Mumtaz uz zamani*) *urs* ceremony was held as is the custom every year. At the august command of his Royal Highness, groups of scholars, and those who have committed Holy Quran to memory (*huffaz*) and reciters of the Holy Book (*qurra*) pious and virtuous men gathered at the divinely illumined place, the Paradise like mausoleum (*mazar-i-firdaus asar*). Prayers (*tasbih was tahlil*) were offered. The emperor of the Seven Climes along with the princes gathered on the same paradise like tomb. As is the custom a sum of twenty-five thousand rupees were distributed among the needy

²⁷ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folios 87-88.

and poor. Thereafter all returned to the royal palace (*daulatkhana*). Next day, on Wednesday, the emperor again visited the sacred tomb of that person enveloped in divine forgiveness and favour along with the royal ladies who also paid respect (*ziyārat*) to the sacred tomb. It was ordered that a sum of twenty-five thousand should be distributed among the needy and deserving.²⁸

On closer inspection, the multitude of events which took place around the empress's death anniversary was a "celebration of life". Maybe the loss of the one he loved the most led him to appreciate the worth of life more and the emperor sought to spread a little joy in all his subjects. But despite all his attempts to the contrary his life was deeply steeped in the quagmire of sadness. He was like a monk who used to do annual pilgrimage to the shrine of his wife, the empress in order to find some shred of solace. Maybe peace and heartfelt happiness still eluded him for he remained till the last day of his life a very faithful disciple to the shrine, the Taj Mahal. But being the great king as was he, he had found a way to camouflage his eternal sadness in a garb of gaiety.

The epilogue called *Khatima* at the end of the volume contains an account of notable intellectual and spiritual personalities of the period, in the form of biographical accounts called *tazkirā*. This section containing biographical notices is divided into four categories called *tabaqa*. The first division consisted of the famous Sufi-saints (*mashāikh*s), the second is concerned with the scholars (*fuzalas*), men of pen and letters, who excelled in learning and knowledge, the third category consisted of the famous physicians and the fourth with the poets and littérateurs, who flourished under the liberal patronage of Shah Jahan and adorned his court.²⁹

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²⁸ *Shah Jahan-Nama*, folio 878.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, folios 924-36. For a description of various important personage described see Gulfishan Khan, 2014, "The Reign of Emperor Shah Jahan as Reflected in the Historiography".

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