

GAIL MINAULT

Delhi College and Urdu*

IN the generation before the Indian revolt of 1857, the intellectual, literary, and religious life of Delhi was rich and vibrant. In contrast to the crepuscular portrait painted by Spear in *Twilight of the Mughals*,¹ this was a period marked by renaissance and revival. In literature, this was the age of Ghālib, Mo'min, Zauq, and Bahādur Shāh Zafar.² In religion, Shāh 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz and his disciples and descendants sparked a number of religious reform movements.³ The printing press came to the Mughal capital in this period, and newspapers and printed books began to appear, marking the emergence of a wider reading public.⁴ At Delhi College, an educational institution founded in the late 1820s combining a pre-existing *madrassa* and a new college that taught English, the effort was made, if not to reconcile, at least to juxtapose oriental and western learning, both

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¹Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughals* (1953; rpt. Delhi: Oriental Reprints, 1969).

²See Ralph Russell, ed., *Ghalib, the Poet and His Age* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1972).

³Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 46–68; Marc Gaborieau, "Late Persian, Early Urdu: The case of 'Wahhabi' Literature (1818–1857)," in *Confluence of Cultures: French Contributions to Indo-Persian Studies*, Françoise Delvoye, ed. (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994), pp. 170–96.

⁴I.e.: *Dehlī Urdū Akhbār* (1840), rpt. with foreword by Khvāja Aḥmad Fārūqī (Delhi: Urdu Department, Delhi University, 1972).

taught through the medium of Urdu.⁵ In all these arenas of intellectual life, Urdu was crucial. This was the age in which Urdu emerged, not only as a language of courtly poetry—that had already happened—but also as a language of prose, for the persuasion of religious followers, for the molding of public opinion, and for the transmission of knowledge.

Delhi College was only a part of a complex of literary and intellectual currents in the Mughal capital at that time, but it was a crucial, mediating institution. It brought together two forms of intellectual patronage: *auqāf* (sing.: *vaqf*) or Muslim endowments for pious purposes, such as the encouragement of religious learning;⁶ and patronage by the state—in this case the expenditure of tax revenues by the East India Company to support education. The Company at that time was debating what sort of education to patronize, “oriental” or “western.” The college also brought together these two traditions of learning, although it must be emphasized that these categories are themselves constructions of cultural debates that began in the late eighteenth century and are by no means over in our time.⁷ Roughly defined, the oriental curriculum involved the study of the classical languages of India: Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian, and the texts and branches of knowledge associated with their literatures and religions. The western curriculum at that time was a humanistic one, in transition from its own classical and clerical past, toward a greater emphasis on science. It included grammar and composition in modern languages (though Latin and Greek had not yet been dethroned in Europe), readings in history, philosophy, and such sciences as “natural philosophy,” various branches of mathematics, and astronomy.

The college also incorporated two styles of transmission of knowledge: The first was the *madrassa* tradition, based on the teacher-student (*ustād-shagird*) relationship and emphasizing oral transmission of set texts. The texts may have been copied out by hand, but the reproduction of knowledge was chiefly via memorization and oral exposition as vs. the printed word. In the western curriculum, the emphasis was increasingly

⁵Ābdu 'l-Ḥaq, *Marḥūm Dehlī Kālēj*, (Karachi: Anjuman-e Taraqqī-e Urdū, 1962); hereafter cited as MDK.

⁶See Gregory Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁷For an addition to the post-Saidian debate about Orientalism, see M. Tavakoli-Targhi, “Orientalism’s Genesis Amnesia,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 17:1 (1996): 1–14.

on printed textbooks that could be mechanically reproduced and hence readily and cheaply available for students to read. Orality was being replaced by print, consequently, and thus the teacher-student relationship, while still important, was challenged by the vision of the individual scholar, deriving his knowledge from books or scientific observations. Such an individual style of scholarship necessitated the exchange of ideas via print, in scholarly journals or more popular periodicals.⁸

Similar to Delhi College, Urdu was a mediator. For the later Mughal emperors, Urdu had already become a mediating language between Persian and regional Indian languages, and between the imperial court and various regional powers. For the British too, Urdu (or Hindustani) filled the need for an Indian vernacular that was more generally understood than Persian, but that nevertheless had an association with government and incorporated administrative terms and concepts. It is important to remember that, as part of the process that resulted in the establishment of English as the language of higher administration in India in the nineteenth century, the vernaculars also achieved new recognition, utility, and importance. At Delhi College, Urdu was the common language in which the dialogue between different curricula, styles of teaching, and modes of transmission of knowledge was carried out.⁹

The Foundations of Delhi College

The British government in India first began to take responsibility for the education of Indian élites following the revision of the East India Company's charter in 1813, when a sum was set aside from a projected surplus in the annual revenues for the support of education. The particu-

⁸See, e.g., Dale Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and its Social Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* [CSSH], 20:4 (Oct. 1978), 485–516; various articles in N. Grandin and M. Gaborieau, eds., *Madrasa: La Transmission du Savoir dans le Monde Musulman* (Paris: Edns. Arguments, 1997); and Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* [MAS], 27:1 (1993), 229–51.

⁹Muzaffar Alam, "The Pursuit of Persian: Languages in Mughal Politics," *MAS*, 32:2 (1998), 317–49; David Lelyveld, "Zubān-e Urdū-e Mu'allā and the Idol of Linguistic Origins," *Annual of Urdu Studies* [AUS], 9 (1994), 107–17; cf. Sheldon Pollock, "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular," *Journal of Asian Studies* [JAS], 57:1 (1998), 6–37.

lar clause in the revised charter also brought to a head the debate between Orientalists and Anglicists within the British Indian administration, for it called not only for the “revival and improvement of literature [presumably oriental] and the encouragement of the learned natives of India,” but also for “the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences [presumably western] among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.”¹⁰ This provision in the law remained a dead letter until the 1820s, when a revenue surplus actually materialized, and when the General Committee of Public Instruction [GCPI] was established in Calcutta, followed by local committees in urban centers around India, including Delhi.

The Delhi Committee of Public Instruction, which included both British officials and local notables, investigated the state of learning in the Mughal capital in the early 1820s and reported that there were a number of *madrasas* and many smaller schools in the city, but that many of them were in a state of serious decline.¹¹ Among them was the Madrasa of Ghāziū ’d-Dīn Khān, built in the early eighteenth century just outside Delhi’s Ajmeri Gate. The Madrasa was a handsome late Mughal edifice, in the familiar red sandstone of Shahjahanabad, consisting of a mosque and a two-storied arcade that contained rooms for the teachers and students and enclosed a courtyard, entered by a massive gateway. Adjacent to the mosque was the marble tomb of the founder, Ghāziū ’d-Dīn Khān Fīrōz Jaṅg, a nobleman who had served the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in the Deccan and who was the father of the man who became the first Nizam of Hyderabad. In his will, Ghāziū ’d-Dīn Khān had established a *vaqf* for the support of the *madrasa*. Like many such endowments, it provided stipends not only for the teachers but also the students.¹²

By the early nineteenth century, the income from the original *vaqf* of Ghāziū ’d-Dīn Khān had declined, as had the student body, and the *madrasa* was in disrepair.¹³ About this time, the Delhi Committee of Public Instruction took an interest in this institution. In the mid-1820s,

¹⁰H. Sharp, ed., *Selections from Educational Records*, Pt. I (1920; rpt. New Delhi: National Archives of India, 1965), p. 22.

¹¹Board Collections [BC], #s 25694–25695, 1826–27, Vol. 909, pp. 487–91, 540–53, 565. India Office Library & Records [IOLR].

¹²J. H. Richey, ed., *Selections from Educational Records*, Pt. II (1922; rpt. New Delhi: National Archives of India, 1965), pp. 252–3.

¹³BC, #s 25694–95, 1826–27, Vol. 909, p. 565 ff. IOLR.

they obtained a grant from the general education fund for the support of oriental learning at the *madrasa*. In 1827, the government sanctioned an additional sum, supplemented by funds raised locally, to start English classes and teach astronomy and mathematics “on European principles” at the school. About this time, the Madrasa of Ghāziu ’d-Dīn Khān began to be called Delhi College, with an oriental section (the *madrasa*), where Arabic and Persian grammar, literature, and other Islamic subjects (*‘ulūm*) were taught, and an anglo-vernacular section (or institution), where western subjects were taught. In both sections, the medium of instruction was Urdu.¹⁴

Then in 1828 or 1829, Navāb I’timādu ’d-Daula, a minister at the court of Awadh, established a new *vaqf*, specifying that the income from the endowment should go to the support of oriental learning in his native city, Delhi. He asked the East India Company to administer this endowment, indicating that—less than a decade before the Anglicize triumphalism of Macaulay’s famous Minute on Education—North Indian notables felt no cultural threat from the British administration’s educational policies. The GCPI thanked the Navāb for his “munificent donation” and suggested that—rather than found another institution—the income from his endowment could best be spent supporting the existing Delhi *madrasa*. The local committee in Delhi applied the funds from the Navāb’s *vaqf* to the account of the oriental section of Delhi College, and reassigned part of the government funds to the anglo-vernacular section of the college.¹⁵

By the mid-1830s, power on the GCPI in Calcutta had shifted definitively in favor of the Anglicists, leading to Macaulay’s Minute with its famous line about the formation of “a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” that has been quoted ever since. He firmly rejected further support for oriental education, and opined that, even at those oriental institutions that survived the government’s change in policy, stipends to students should cease.¹⁶

In Delhi, the new policies emanating from Calcutta resulted in the cancellation of a number of student stipends. What’s more, the Principal

¹⁴MDK, pp. 22–23, 32–33; Sharp, pp. 188–9.

¹⁵Home (Pub) file # 8–14 & KW (15 July 1840), National Archives of India [NAI].

¹⁶Sharp, p. 116.

of Delhi College, J.H. Taylor, using some creative book-keeping, had been using funds from the Navāb's *vaqf* to meet expenses in both sections of the college, resulting in a further cut in support to the oriental section. The local committee, fighting against Calcutta's policies, protested that the state had "greatly injured the interests of the institution." It also investigated Taylor's actions, expressing doubts that "the wishes of the Navāb have been fulfilled," and reprimanded him for damaging "one of the few public colleges left to the people in which Oriental Literature is still being taught under the patronage of the British Government."¹⁷

Sir James Thomason, who later became Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwestern Provinces, emphasized Delhi College's unique character:

The Oriental College in Delhi ... occupies a prominent part in the eyes of a large and influential body of the native community, whom it is most important to convince of our liberality and sincerity ... Great and successful exertions had been made [by those connected with the college locally], and these it would be unjust and unwise to disappoint.¹⁸

Among the local notables who supported the college was Muftī Ṣadru 'd-Dīn Khān "Āzurda," the Ṣadru 'ṣ-Ṣudūr (chief judge) of Delhi, a member of the local committee of public instruction, and a poet who hosted one of the most illustrious literary salons of the city. Āzurda's *mushā'iras* regularly featured the artistry of Ghālib, Mo'min and other poets.¹⁹ The local government had no desire to offend figures of such eminence.

The government in Calcutta took some remedial action, allowing some support for "efficient" oriental learning, and following up the reprimand of Taylor by replacing him as Principal with an Orientalist scholar, Felix Boutros, who had the advantage of knowing the languages he was supposed to be supervising. Boutros is mentioned in the sources as a French scholar of Arabic, but his name suggests that he was an Arab Christian from either Egypt or the Levant who had been educated in

¹⁷Letter from Lt. Robinson to J.H. Taylor, d. Delhi, 15 March 1839. Home (Pub), 8-14 & KW (15 July 1840), NAI.

¹⁸Richey, p. 257.

¹⁹Abdu 'r-Raḥman Parvāz Iṣlāḥī, *Muftī Ṣadru 'd-Dīn Āzurda: Ḥayāt, Shakhṣiyat, 'Ilmī aur Adabī Kārnamā* (New Delhi: Maktaba-e Jāmi'a, 1977), pp. 33-8, 47-51.

France.²⁰

Under Boutros and his successor as Principal, Dr. Aloys Sprenger, Delhi College developed a high reputation as a center of learning in the Mughal capital, and as an arena of dialogue between eastern and western curricula, carried out in Urdu. This was a phenomenon that Macaulay's grandiloquent minute did not foresee. The Orientalist-Anglicist controversy envisaged either traditional, religiously-based literary learning or else western learning in English, but not a combination of the two with instruction in a modern Indian language. This successful experiment was made possible by the many learned men of talent who participated as teachers, students, and administrators. Muftī Ṣadru 'd-Dīn Āzurda served on the local committee, as did Saiyid Ḥāmid 'Alī Khān, the nephew and heir of Navāb I'timādu 'd-Daula. The local committee originally hoped to employ a disciple of Shāh 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz as the head Arabic teacher,²¹ showing that there was no animosity between at least one branch of the Shāh's lineage and the British administration. By the early 1830s, the Arabic teacher was Mamlūk 'Alī Nānautavī, a distinguished Islamic scholar from a lineage that later produced the founder of the Deoband school. As Persian teacher, the committee hired Imām Bakhsh "Ṣehbā'ī," who had distinguished himself as a tutor to a number of leading families in the city.²²

The poet Ghālib was also a candidate for the Persian post at Delhi College, but failed to get it because of a famous misunderstanding. Ghālib arrived for the interview in his palanquin, but when Thomason, who was conducting the interviews, failed to come out to the curb to receive the poet—did not greet him, in other words, in the way Ghālib felt befitting—he did not go through with the interview, but left in a huff.²³ Thomason explained to the poet that he was bound by regulations. If this were a *darbār*, a formal welcome would be in order. In such courtly

²⁰Sharp, pp. 150–1; MDK, pp. 154–5; cf. Home (Pub), 8–14 & KW (15 July 1840), NAI.

²¹This was Maulvī Rashīdu 'd-Dīn Khān. The records are incomplete in the 1820s, and he may have been employed at the Madrasa in that period. BC #s 25694–95, 1826–27, Vol. 909, pp. 551–52, IOLR.

²²Khvāja Muḥammad Ḥāmid, "Imām Bakhsh Ṣehbā'ī," *Navā'-e Adab*, 14:1 (Jan. 1963), 14–33.

²³Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), pp. 62–3.

rituals, the British still held to Mughal forms, but not in interviews for employment. This anecdote could simply be an amusing reflection of the poet's problematic relationship with the British. It was not an easy one, and Ghālib never fully received what he felt was his due. His pride, and a disjunction between what he and his British interlocutor felt was proper etiquette, got in the way of his securing a post at the college.²⁴ Imām Bakhsh was presumably more accommodating.

Translating Cultures

Notwithstanding such episodes, the fact remains that Orientalist scholars, British administrators, and local literati and notables were all part of making Delhi College what it was. Its creative role included not only instruction, but also translation, publication, and popularization. Vernacularization, making more knowledge available to more people, was essential to these processes. Macaulay had disparaged the “vernacular dialects” as being unfit “vehicles for conveying knowledge.” His opinion, both uninformed and condescending, nevertheless foresaw the need for translation and adaptation. In the development of textbooks and other forms of scholarly prose, Delhi College was at the center of a major effort of translation, further evidence of its mediating role.

This linguistic mediation involved translating texts into Urdu out of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit for the oriental section, and out of English and other western languages for the anglo-vernacular section. Translation, however, is an inexact science, dependent on the skill of persons who may know one language better than the other, on varying interpretations of meaning, and upon teamwork that is sometimes in short supply. Translation can betray, as well as convey, meaning. What concepts were translated and what was understood by readers of the texts are matters that are not easy to decipher. Nevertheless, to obtain adequate textbooks, the college had to initiate the task.

In the early 1840s, Principal Boutros started the Vernacular Translation Society, following the earlier example of the Calcutta Book Society but at a more advanced level. The society translated textbooks in medicine, law, science, economics, and history from English into Urdu.

²⁴Cf. Peter Hardy, “Ghalib and the British,” in Russell, ed., *Ghalib, the Poet and His Age*, pp. 54–69.

Teachers and students both participated in the work of translation, creating their own textbooks in the process—an interesting blending of the oral and written traditions. Individual local benefactors helped finance the first translations and publications; then sales of texts helped the effort along. Publications appeared from a number of local presses and eventually from the college’s own press, the Maṭba‘u ‘l-‘Ulūm. The government also agreed to finance the translation of math and geometry texts in order to bring western sciences to students in the oriental section.²⁵

The list of the society’s publications includes basic textbooks such as Euclid’s geometry (which had been a part of the Arabic as well as the western curriculum), and histories of England, Greece, and Rome, and the geography of India. Science texts included both “natural philosophy” and *yūnānī ḥibb* (also from Arabic). Translation of oriental classics from Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit included Sa’dī’s *Gulistān*, selections from *The Thousand and One Nights*, *Laila and Majnun*, and the *Dharma Shastras*.²⁶ The Vernacular Translation Society, therefore, made it possible for students of Delhi College to participate in both “the revival and improvement of literature” and “the promotion of the knowledge of the sciences,” without any apparent conflict between the two goals. Although the two sections of the school remained discrete, the Orientalist-Anglicist controversy seemed to be much less salient in the Mughal capital city than it did in the chambers of government in Calcutta.

The study of western sciences such as astronomy and calculus was in great demand among the students of the college, including those in the oriental section. Delhi College students were cognizant of the Copernican revolution,²⁷ even though most did not study English literature or west-

²⁵MDK, pp. 127–47; Khvāja Aḥmad Fārūqī *Zauq-o-Justajū* (Lucknow: Idāra-e Farōgh-e Urdū, 1967), pp. 233–91; Intizār Mirzā, “Qadĉm Delhī Kālēj kī Adabī Khidamāt kā Jā’iza,” Diss. Delhi University, Department of Urdu, 1984.

²⁶MDK, pp. 148–53; Report of the GCPI, Bengal for 1840/41–1841/42, App. XV by Boutros, d. Delhi, 1 July 1842, IOLR, V/24/948.

²⁷In fact, Newton’s *Principia* and other works of European mathematics and astronomy that supported the heliocentric view of the universe had already been translated into Arabic and Persian in India in the late eighteenth century by Maulvī Tafazzul Ḥusain Khān of Lucknow. He is mentioned in the *Asiatick Annual Register* of 1803, pp. 1–8; and in Abū Ṭālib Khān, *Maṣṣir-e Ṭālibī* (personal communication between the author and M. Tavakoli-Targhi). Cf. Tavakoli-Targhi, “Orientalism’s Genesis Amnesia;” and C.A. Bayly, “Colonial Star Wars:

ern philosophy. There are several reasons for this that have little or nothing to do with religious prejudice or cultural resistance. The main reason was that in Delhi at that time, a knowledge of English was not a requirement for government service. Even after Persian was disestablished in the mid-1830s, Urdu was officially used in the local courts. Knowledge of Persian remained the mark of a man of culture, Urdu the language of everyday discourse and, increasingly, of government and public business. Hence a traditional literary education, plus—to be sure—some personal connections, were sufficient to gain access to government service. Many Delhi College students, of whatever religion, were willing to learn to speak some English, if only as a useful means of communication with their rulers. If they pursued literary studies, however, they usually did so in the classical languages of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit.

The curriculum at the college shows that the distinction between oriental and western learning, while maintained organizationally, was less clear in practice. Indeed, Boutros hoped to make the annual exams comparable in all subjects—except literature—for the students of both sections of the college. In the oriental *madrassa*, senior Arabic students of Maulānā Mamlūk ‘Alī were examined on the *Dīvān* of Mutanabbī, the *Maqāmāt* of Ḥarīrī, and excerpts from *Alf Laila* (The 1001 Nights), on grammar and composition, and on their ability to translate Arabic works into Urdu (some of which were then published by the Translation Society). Students of Persian studying with Maulvī Imām Bakhsh were examined on the *Inshā’-e Abu ‘l-Faḡl* (a manual of correspondence by the Mughal historian), the *Sikandarnāma* of Niẓāmī (tales of Alexander the Great), plus grammar, composition, and translation into Urdu. In history, they read the *Tārikh-r Timūrī* (History of Timur), in geography, the *Mir’atu ‘l-Aqālīm* (A Reflection of the Climes), both in Urdu. In law, Sunni students read the *Hidāya* (a digest of Ḥanafī *fiqh*); and Shi‘as read *Sharī’atu ‘l-Islām* and *Nafḥatu ‘l-Īmān* (digests of Shi‘a *fiqh*). In math, the *madrassa* students studied the Urdu translation of Brown’s arithmetic, a standard textbook of the day, and in geometry—predictably—Euclid. In the Sanskrit classes, an experiment to teach math via the *Lilavati* (a mathematical portion of Bhaskara’s *Siddhanta Shiromani*) did not succeed. Students complained that it was too difficult to learn both Bhaskara’s Sanskrit and math simultaneously; the teachers agreed and turned to

The Politics of the Heavens in India” (draft in author’s possession, courtesy of C.A. Bayly).

math textbooks. Other subjects included logic, principles of natural philosophy, principles of legislation and of political economy, and the history of India.²⁸

The curriculum of the English institution included many of the same subjects. The students learned English and Urdu grammar and composition, and read literary selections. Urdu classes included instruction from Platt's *Grammar of Hindustani*, and readings from Mīr Amman's *Bāgh-o-Bahār* (Tale of Four Dervishes), and *Anvār-e Suhailī* (Animal Fables). In English, lower classes read from Richardson's *Selections* of poetry and prose, Bacon's *Essays*, and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*. Upper classes tackled Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *Richard III*, more of Bacon's *Essays*, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Apart from English classes, the textbooks were Urdu translations of basic texts of that time: Goldsmith's histories of England, Greece, and Rome, Marshman's history of India, Mill's political economy, Macnaughton on Hindu and Muslim law, principles of social legislation—*Uṣūl Qavā'idu 'l-Akhlāq*—compiled from the works of Bentham, Prinsep's abstract of civil regulations, Whately's logic and rhetoric, and general works on geography and agriculture. In mathematics, Brown's arithmetic textbook, Euclid's geometry (a constant), and the principles of algebra, calculus, and plane trigonometry were taught to various classes. The lower classes were also instructed in drawing and surveying. In science, in addition to general natural philosophy and physiology, other textbooks on the list of translations included Herschel's astronomy, a manual of chemistry by O'Shaughnessy, and Goldsmith's animated nature (zoology).²⁹

The Impact of Print

²⁸MDK, pp. 81–102; Report of the GCPI, NWP for 1843–44, Apps. N and R by Boutros; Report of the GCPI, NWP for 1844–45, pp. 73–76, App. A, IOLR, V/24/905.

²⁹*Ibid.*, In comparing lists of works in MDK and reports of the GCPI, it is not always clear whether lists of works translated by the Vernacular Translation Society, as reported by Boutros, represent aspirations or accomplishment. MDK's lists of curricula seem more definite; these reflect the GCPI reports, with modifications over the years.

In the generation between 1827 and 1857, hundreds of students, Hindu, Muslim, and a few Christians,³⁰ attended Delhi College. They studied with the teachers already mentioned, and many went on to become teachers at the college themselves. They worked under the aegis of the various principals: J.H. Taylor (whom we encountered above), Felix Boutros (who replaced Taylor and who was the moving spirit behind the translation effort), and then Dr. Aloys Sprenger, a medical doctor from the Tyrol who had joined the Bengal medical service in order to pursue his other, more compelling interest—Arabic and Persian philology—via a career in India. Dr. Sprenger was especially influential in the development of publications at the college press. In 1845, he founded a journal at the college that he called *Qirānu 's-Sa'dain*, or “The Conjunction of Two [Fortunate] Planets,” an Arabic astrological term denoting the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus, but also a metaphor for a successful collaboration. The reference to the interaction of two cultures, East and West, in the mission of the college, is clear.³¹

Qirānu 's-Sa'dain, was only one of the journals published by the college, and it did not survive for long. Another, that enjoyed a longer run, was the *Khairkhvāh-e Hind* (renamed the *Muḥibb-e Hind*), edited by Master Ramchandra. Ramchandra, a Kayastha who eventually converted to Christianity, was a math professor at Delhi College and intellectually one of its leading lights.³² He wrote an original treatise on algebra that

³⁰Enrollment figures taken from GCPI reports are cited in MDK. In 1845, for example, there were 460 students, 215 in the Oriental section (75 studying Arabic, 109 Persian, and 31 Sanskrit), and 245 in the Anglo-Vernacular section. Of these, 299 were Hindu, 146 Muslim, and 15 Christian (p. 46). In 1853, there were only 320 students, 121 in the Oriental section (Arabic 39, Persian 57, Sanskrit 25), and 199 in the Anglo-Vernacular. Of these, 217 were Hindu, 93 Muslim, and 10 Christian (p. 55).

³¹On Sprenger, see MDK, pp. 155–56; Obituary in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* [JRAS] (April 1894): 394–95; and M. Ikram Chaghatai, “Dr. Aloys Sprenger (1813–1893): His Life and Contribution to Urdu Language and Literature,” *Iqbal Review*, 36:1 (1995), 77–99.

³²On Ramchandra, see MDK, pp. 168–72; Edwin Jacob, *A Memoir of Professor Yesudas Ramchandra* (Kanpur: Christ Church Mission Press, 1902); Ṣādiqū 'r-Raḥmān Qidvā'i, *Māṣṭar Rāmčandrā* (Delhi: Department of Urdu, Delhi University, 1961); Sayyida Ja'far, *Māṣṭar Rāmčandrā aur Urdū Naṣr kē Irṭiqā' mēn Unkā Hiṣṣa* (Hyderabad: Abul Kalam Azad Oriental Research Institute, 1960).

received favorable notice in Europe and ultimately earned him an award from the government. In his writing and editing of *Muhibb-e Hind* Ramchandra gave evidence of a voracious and eclectic mind that, in addition, reflected the ideas and books that were being discussed at Delhi College and in intellectual circles in Delhi in the 1840s.³³ Some of the titles of articles written by Ramchandra that appeared in the pages of *Muhibb-e Hind* exemplify the range of topics: “The Divisibility of Matter—A Strange Description from the Researches of European Scientists and Scholars” [“Ēk Ḥāl-e ‘Ajīb Ḥukmāyān-aur ‘Āqilān-e Yūrap kī Taḥqīqāt mēn sē”]; “A Description of a Diving Bell by which means Things Sunken in the Sea may be Retrieved” [“Žikr-e Ḍā’ēviṅg Bel, jis sē Ḍūbā Huvā Asbāb Samandar sē Nikāl Sakēn”]; articles on astronomy, on the work of Sir Isaac Newton, and a discussion of human reason [*insān kī ‘aql kā bayān*].

Ramchandra also included articles about ancient Greece (“On Demosthenes”), and about other Asian cultures (“On Confucius”), and serialized translations of Lane’s *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* and of a biography of Shāh ‘Abbās of Iran. Other serializations included Vernacular Translation Society publications such as a history of England [*Tarikh-e Inglistān*] and Elphinstone’s *The Kingdom of Caubul*, and original publications from the college press, such as *Tarikh-e Yūsufī*, the travels of Yūsuf Khān Kambalpōsh to England. Ramchandra also discussed new technologies of agriculture and irrigation, and summarized works of history and popular science. One of the regular features in this periodical, devoted largely to dissemination of new knowledge about East and West, was a selection of Urdu poetry derived from accounts of local *mushā’iras*. This was evidence that relations between the college and local literati were still good.³⁴

The development of Urdu as a language of public discourse and

³³Ramchandra, *A Treatise on Problems of Maxima and Minima Solved by Algebra* (London: Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1859); cf. Dhruv Raina and S. Irfan Habib, “Cultural Foundations of a Nineteenth-Century Mathematical Project,” *EPW*, 24:37 (16 Sept. 1989), 2082–6.

³⁴Qidvā’i, *Māṣṭar Rāmčandrā*, app., pp. 178–94; Fārūqī, pp. 233–91; S. Irfan Habib and Dhruv Raina, “The Discourse on Scientific Rationality: A Study of Master Ramchandra, in T. Niranjana, P. Sudhir, and V. Dhareshwar, eds., *Interrogating Modernity* (Calcutta: Seagull, 1993), pp. 348–68; *Muhibb-e Hind*, Nos. 14–37 (some Nos. missing), (Sept. 1848–Aug./Sept. 1850), IOLR.

transmission of knowledge in print occurred, in part, thanks to personalities associated with Delhi College directly or indirectly. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the founder of Aligarh College, is sometimes erroneously named among the graduates of Delhi College, perhaps because his first scheme for Aligarh was patterned after the two sections, and the Urdu medium, of the Delhi institution. He did not study there but did collaborate with Maulavī Imām Bakhsh, Persian teacher at the college, on a study of the topography of Delhi, *Āṣāru ṣ-Ṣanādīd*, which remains a leading source on the condition of the old city before much of it was destroyed during and after the 1857 revolt.³⁵ Maulānā Mamlūk ‘Alī Nānautavī, Arabic teacher at the college, had among his students and descendants scholars who eventually founded the *madrassa* at Deoband.³⁶ Delhi College was thus, in no small measure, the precursor of the two supposedly opposing centers of Indo-Muslim cultural revival and reform in the late nineteenth century: Aligarh and Deoband.

The role of the college in the literary life of the Mughal capital was significant. The relationship of Muftī Ṣadru ‘d-Dīn Āzurda to the local college committee has already been noted. The Muftī took part in examining advanced students in Urdu and Persian, and the more skilled among them gained access to his literary salon. The college press and its publications were respected in the city. Maulvī Muḥammad Bāqir, founder in 1836 of one of the first Urdu newspapers in Delhi, the *Dehlī Urdū Akhbār*, printed a number of the Vernacular Society’s translations in his press and sent his son, Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād, to the college.³⁷ Mohan Lal Kashmiri, who studied surveying at the college and was one of its first graduates, accompanied Burnes to Bukhara and contributed to the accounts of those explorations. Other graduates of the college included Maulvī Naẓīr Aḥmad (1833–1912), whose father sent him from Bijnor to Delhi to study traditional Islamic sciences. When Naẓīr Aḥmad was offered a stipend at Delhi College, his father agreed, on one condition: that he would not learn English. He did so only later in life, became a Deputy Collector in the British administration, and helped translate the Criminal Code into Urdu. He is best known as the author of numerous

³⁵Christian W. Troll, “A Note on an Early Topographical Work of Sayyid Ahmad Khan: *Asar al-Sanadid*,” JRAS (1972), 135–46.

³⁶Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, pp. 74–5.

³⁷MDK, pp. 159–79; David Lelyveld, *Aligarh’s First Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 124–8.

didactic novels, some of the first works in that form in Urdu. His first novel, *Mirātu 'l-'Arūs* (The Bride's Mirror, 1869), written originally for the instruction of his daughters, won a prize from the British Indian government as a "useful work of literature in the vernacular."³⁸ Another early graduate was Pyārē Lāl "Āshōb," known both as an Urdu poet and author of the ethnography, *Rusūm-e Hind*.³⁹

Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād (1830–1910), the originator of literary criticism in Urdu, was another graduate of Delhi College. His father, Maulvī Muḥammad Bāqir, mentioned above as the proprietor of the *Dehlī Urdū Akhbār*, later supported the 1857 revolt and was executed by the British. Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād had worked for his father's newspaper and fled Delhi after the revolt. He was later able to join government service in the Punjab and there wrote his major work, *Āb-e Ḥayāt*, a history of Urdu literature. His judgments on the literature of the past bear the stamp of his education, and his loss. As a great prose stylist, he often misjudged or disparaged the poetic muse of others, although when evaluating poets, he tended to glorify the poets of Delhi over all others. He served as the Secretary of the Anjuman-e Panjāb, a literary and educational reform association in Lahore. Together with W.R.M. Holroyd, the Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab in the 1870s, and Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī, another Urdu poet with ties to Delhi, Āzād helped institute a series of *mushā'iras* in Lahore that promoted a new style of poetry, more topical and "natural" (according to English standards of the day) than the lyrical *ghazal*.⁴⁰

Yet another well-known graduate of Delhi College was Maulvī Żakāu 'l-Lāh (1832–1911), scion of a family that had served as tutors to the Mughal dynasty. Żakāu 'l-Lāh taught mathematics and wrote prodigiously

³⁸Iftikhār Aḥmad Şiddiqī, *Maulvī Nazīr Aḥmad Dehlavī: Aḥvāl-o-Āşār* (Lahore: Majlis-e Taraqqī-e Adab, 1971); C.M. Naim, "Prize-Winning Adab," in Barbara Metcalf, ed., *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 290–314.

³⁹Pyārē Lāl Āshōb Dehlavī, *Rusūm-e Hind* (1868; rpt. Lahore: Majlis-e Taraqqī-e Adab, 1961).

⁴⁰C.M. Naim, "Mughal and British Patronage of Urdu Poetry: A Comparison," in *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. Barbara S. Miller (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 259–76; for a discussion of Āzād and Ḥālī's literary criticism and the changing canons of taste, see Frances Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), especially. pt. 3.

during his long career as an educator. Among his works, in addition to a large number of mathematics textbooks, was a laudatory history in Urdu of Victoria's reign, the *Vikṭoriyā Nāma*. He is the subject of a respectful biography by C.F. Andrews.⁴¹

In the long run, undoubtedly the greatest accomplishment of Delhi College was its contribution to Urdu language and literature. Through its teaching, sponsorship of translations, and the writings and publications of its teachers and students, Delhi College contributed to the development of Urdu prose as a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge. It encouraged the development of a scholarly prose style, more direct than the flowery court prose of old, and contributed to the development of new literary forms, such as the novel, the short story, the essay, and literary criticism. New literary forms and styles encouraged the exchange of ideas in an emergent periodical literature, including newspapers and the periodicals published by the college and other presses. Delhi College was thus an institution that mediated between eastern and western cultures and mentalities, and did so in the vernacular, contributing to the emergence of an Urdu-speaking and reading élite in North India, composed of individuals of all religious persuasions. □

⁴¹C.F. Andrews, *Zaka Ullah of Delhi* (1929; rpt. Lahore: Universal Books, 1976), pp. 57–66.