

Hali the Poet, the Critic and the Biographer,  
and his influence on Urdu Literature.

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Faculty: Indo-Aryan Philology.

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### Introduction.

I originally intended to do some research on the tendencies in Modern Urdu Literature, but took up Hali on the suggestion of my tutor Dr. T. Grahame Bailey, since he is the one figure in the early Islamic Renaissance who represents all its varied aspects.

The study of Urdu literature reveals two different and conflicting cultural patterns, which, on account of the absence of better terms, can be called the "Classical" and the "Modern"; The poetry and the prose of Hali mark the advent of the "modern"; they are of the nature of a reaction against classical traditionalism. To understand and appreciate the work of Hali, therefore, it is necessary not only to study the nature of the environment which produced him, but also to examine the root-factors of the classical culture and its ideals against which he led the revolt.

The thesis, therefore, proceeds upon these lines, that is to say, an examination of the classic ideals, a rather detailed descriptive account of the Indian Renaissance, followed by a critical study of the mind and art of Hali and his influence on Urdu literature.

Fully conscious of its defects, for what author is not, I venture to submit this thesis as a sincere contribution to the literature of my country.

I must take this opportunity to thank my learned tutor, Dr.T.Grahame Bailey, for his valuable advice and the kindly interest he was pleased to take in my work. Mr.Rossetti, our School Secretary,interested himself in my endeavours and Captain R.Townshend-Stephens did most of the transliteration work.

A word about transliteration: I have not thought it fit to touch those words which have become familiar to the public by their anglicised spelling, such as Delhi, Benares, etc. Since Hali occurs so frequently I have left it alone. It reads: Hālī-if properly transliterated.

*Yasaddugue Husain*

I.

Chapter  
I.  
The Classic Ideals.

I.

One thing the Middle Ages in India generally lacked—curiosity. I have taken care to qualify the statement because there is very considerable testimony available to prove that thought did not go to sleep for any considerable period in the Middle Ages. But in the Court circles, and among the Muslims in general, there are no signs of active thought. An unchanging sameness pervades the ages. Time rolls on from century to century, dynasties rise and fall, the political world is full of storm and stress, but they leave the world nearly the same as they found it. During the Middle Ages things had come to a standstill. The world had acquired the immobility of a fossil.

The present-day critics and historians who plume themselves on their advancing civilisation and deplore the intellectual enslavement and ignorance of the Middle Ages, forget that their ancestors were blissfully ignorant of their own short-comings, and had a strong belief, however ill-grounded, in the greatness of their culture. At any rate they were happy. They had none of the intellectual unrest which is always prodding us. We have a shuddering consciousness of our own imperfection and are almost convulsively reaching out for something better. The man in the Middle Ages had no such teasing problems. We believe that our highest achievements are but relative, merely a link in the interminable series which began millions of years ago and which will for ever extend in an undiscovered future. There is

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something sobering, even saddening, in the thought; and something exultant also that we are the makers of a great future, the glories of which we cannot well imagine, but to the realisation of which we have added our humble share. The man in the Middle Ages was happy because others had worked and he was reaping the benefits of their labour. The world had been perfected centuries ago. This was the accepted view. In art, in literature, in religion, in social usage, in anything, in everything, the ancients had left them exact and precise guidance, and they had nothing to do but to follow them blindly. They had no difficulties or doubts. Everything was clear and plain. The last word had been said, the world was completed and their business was merely to hand over this splendid heritage to the future exactly as it had reached them.

The natural result of this belief in the greatness of the ancients was conservatism. It is this conservatism that Hali attacks in his "Musaddas".<sup>1</sup> It is this conservatism, again, which he has selected as the most distinguishing feature of the past in his "Mazāmin" (Essays).<sup>1</sup>

It does not enter the scheme of the present thesis to discuss this conservative attitude in all its aspects—religious, social, political or literary. How did this belief in the greatness of the past affect literature? This is the question I will discuss at some length in the following paragraphs.

## II.

Muslims, when they entered India, brought with them their

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I. Vide infra.

3.

own language(Persian), mythology, literature, religion and traditions. They had left their homeland behind but in the case of the modes of thought it was not so easy to sever the connection with the maternal sources of inspiration. Their mental state was thus a mere 'carry-over' from the original environment and they spared no effort to adapt it to the new environment so that there might be no break in the continuity of their culture. Once having caught roots in the new soil, the tradition persisted, creating a mind-set which it was not possible to get rid of on account of the worship of the past. Muslim literature in India, therefore, began as 'Colonial literature'. The cultural continuity was preserved in many ways: correspondence with the poets of Persia, the educational system, the exchange of ghazals(lyrical odes), and the patronage of the poets from Persia by the kings and the nobles. The absence of other cultural contacts was a potent contributory factor. The insistence on the continuity of traditions bred conservatism, repressed originality and developed a sense of cultural subservience, so that Indian poets were always obsequious towards even tenth rate poets of Persia.<sup>1</sup> The psychological dead-weight of this complex produced the same "intellectual inferiority, artistic imitativeness and cultural retardation" which is the salient feature of all colonial literature, American, Canadian, Australian, South

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I. Such was the servility of their attitude that they felt proud of even such insulting remarks as that of Shaikh Ali Hazin about Saudā, when he said about him: "Dar pūch-gūyān-i-Hind ghanīsmat ast." (He is tolerable in the trash-writers of India.)

African and Norse.<sup>1</sup>

The continuation of Persian as the literary language of the Muslims in India went to intensify the complex. Every poet aspired to express himself in the superior language, and right down to Ghālib Urdū poetry was considered merely a subsidiary activity, practised for the sake of fun and pastime, and not the outcome of the compulsive urge of poetic experience welling forth into song.<sup>2</sup> So great was the tyranny of this complex that poets dared not even write on indigenous themes, and in several cases gave out that their works were translations from Persian although they were not.

Brought up in this atmosphere of intellectual subservience most of the poets wrote first in Persian and then in their own language. Urdū poetry thus started with a handicap. It could not be true to its environment. The poets were to conform to the traditions which they were required to perpetuate. Their imagination could not soar beyond the narrow limits imposed upon it; they could not think for themselves; they could not invent. They were denied both experience and self-expression.

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 I. The emancipation of American literature took place only after the iconoclastic campaign of Mark Twain, Miller and Walt Whitman. In Canada it came with Saunders and Carman, after the Federation. Australia and South Africa are still struggling to be free and Norway was able to throw off the Danish yoke in the last century.

2. Hāli, with all his love of Urdū, was anxious down to his last days to see the publication of his Persian Diwān. In our own times Iqbāl has once more revived the tendency on the plea, among others, that his thoughts are too sublime to be expressed in Urdu. His 'Bāl-i-Jibrīl', which treats the same subject-matter as 'Piām-i-Mashriq', refutes it. Akbar Munir, Jigar and Yās have followed his lead. It is the manifestation of the same complex of the classicists with its inferiority motivation.

The attitude of Urdu poets before the seventies of the last century towards the Persian poets was thus exactly the same as that of the Neo-Classical School of English literature towards the Classical poets of Rome. They were all for authority. Eliminate individuality and slavishly follow the ancients-this was the literary creed in a nutshell. In subject-matter as well as in treatment, forms of literature, figures of speech and poetic diction, the ancients have left them an inexhaustible store and they had nothing to do but copy them. They must study them carefully; commit to memory the best part of their work and reproduce their sentiments in their style. Imitate, imitate imitate-this was the watch-word of the arbiters of taste. Criticism meant nothing, but the application of this literary code.

What was the result of this complex and this studious imitation of the past? So far as language is concerned the development of Urdu as a natural idiom stopped, or was at least seriously handicapped. There was a wholesale importation of Persian words, Persian imagery, phrases, terms of expression, grammatical peculiarities, references-mythological and historical. The genius of the rising language was crushed in its infancy under the weight of these foreignisms. The literature thus produced has little or no connection with India. It is Persian poetry in a different garb.

Unfortunately these Persian influences began to flow into Urdu in a period of Persian decadence; when poetry had been reduced to verbal juggling, conceits and exaggeration. The Urdu poets cultivated but too carefully all the artificial graces

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of their masters, and hence all their artificiality is but too faithfully reflected in their poetry.

But Urdū poetry is so poor, not because of its borrowed diction and imagery-though this is a great limitation- but principally because it ruled out individuality from literature. The poet must not express himself. His subject-matter is already fixed, beyond which he must not go. He has to trick up a few conventional themes in a conventional language. It is the absence of this personal note\_the sine qua non of poetry\_ that makes Urdū poetry what it is, and not language alone. The diction and imagery of Iqbāl<sup>1</sup> are with a few exceptions entirely conventional. Yet he is interesting because of his individuality. The Urdū poetry under consideration is so poor because it is not a revelation of personality. And though the expression of individuality was taboo in life as well as in literature by the rigorous need of conforming to a definite pattern in every phase of life, yet it was one of the most individualistic of ages. The motto of the Middle Ages was every man for himself and God for us all. All that network of social obligations which appear so natural and necessary to us did not<sup>then</sup> exist. One's duty was confined to oneself or one's relative. Charity there certainly was; but the incentive to it was religion. It was not humanitarian. The rich did not feel that they owed anything to their fellow human-beings as such. They would have been shocked to know that the poor humble person whom they

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I. Vide infra.

7.

relieved stood on the same footing with them as human being, just as he would have flouted the idea that he owed anything to mankind over and above what religion or convention required. He could give to the poor his supercilious charity but not his heart. Ultimately these ideas are traceable to the form of government then prevalent. No doubt a good many of our humanitarian institutions derive their impulse to a tender-hearted regard for the humble whose poverty is nothing but an accident of birth or circumstances; but it is also true that a great deal of it is the result of an enlightened selfishness. A nation is nothing but the aggregation of its individuals. Its strength like that of a chain lies in its weakest link. Hence the imperious necessity for a liberal and humanitarian legislation and social reform. A very apt instance in the case is Gāndhī's war against the caste. The impulse from which it derives its force is mainly national and communal.

As a result of this fellow-feeling and widened interest in the lot of mankind, literature is becoming more and more a social document. History, biography, poetry, fiction, painting most of which do not lend themselves to social propaganda are being used as social lever. The man in the Middle Ages recognized no social responsibility. He had a narrow and comfortable sphere of duties: what lay beyond it no more bothered him than the condition of the Martians affects us. Hence there is no social or humanitarian note in the Classical literature. Stark individualism is writ large on every page of it.

The study of literature and history before the Mutiny definitely reveals a defeatist mentality. Deliverance from life not its acceptance is the goal of endeavour; and religion and philosophy in a thousand ways strengthen the idea. Ultimately this fatalistic conception of life is traceable to the natural surroundings, the form of the government, the leaden weight of caste distinctions and the circumscribed, uneventful life. The germs of the philosophy lie there. Reinforced by the Māyāism and Mokshāism of the Hindu philosophers and the idealistic nihilism of Buddhism it acquired religious sanctity. According to Māyāism our phenomenal world is a world of temporalities. All is illusion. What we call reality is nothing but individual present perceptions, the fleeting presentations in consciousness. The ideal is Mokshā-the release from the pains of Samsārā-which can only be attained by the annihilation of self and desires.

The Nirvānā of Buddhism was the logical conclusion of this philosophy. The object of Buddhism was to escape from the social and political world, not to improve it. With the deliverance from suffering and death as the keynote of its ideal it offered the world the doctrine of Nirvānā- the mergence of the soul in the universal consciousness by the elimination of self. Inquiry, investigation and intellectual curiosity were taboo. All that was required was the emasculation of mind. The highest moments of Indian philosophy, therefore, are those when the utter reality and futility of the world dawns upon the percipient soul.

Excellent arguments can be advanced to establish that these

philosophies are not inherently pessimistic; but it is undeniable that on account of the influence of these teaching the highest goal of life in India for more than two thousand years has been release from the web of existence.

Islam which was essentially a 'praeparatio evangelica' and had started as a reaction against such enervating philosophies, soon became complex, static and corrupt. The principles of 'Ijmā' (agreement) and 'Qiās' (analogy), intended to provide the means of further development and to meet new situations, failed against the infallible 'Sunna' (tradition). The religion deteriorated to the worship of conventions and un-Islamic accretions. The doctrine of the 'established fact' advanced by the Omayyids in support of their political claims resulted in a wide currency of the wrong conception of 'taqdīr' (pre-destination): the will of God is fixed and unalterable and human effort cannot avail. With this disintegrating and enervating doctrine their self-complacency led them to the fantastic notion "that Allah was on the side of the Musalmans, without being sure that they were on the side of Allah."

The extinction of the Caliphate by the Mongols in the Thirteenth century destroyed all war-like impulse. Islam lost its virile note in Persia and India and quickly sank into a quietist and deterministic creed with the gradual assimilation of the Neo-Platonic and Vedāntist ideas. They bred pessimism which is the philosophy of the defeated people. Hence so far as India is concerned there was nothing to choose between Islam and Hinduism. Both had lost grip on life and had succumbed to

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fatalism in their different ways, so that the greatest social wrongs were sanctioned as religious dogmas which none may dare to question much less disobey. Ideas like these have deeply entered the Indian mind. Hence the conception of life is ascetic and other-worldly. The profound pessimism born of this philosophy the Weltschmerz of Nikolus Lenan is reflected in all Indian literature and is clearly seen in Urdu poetry. The Urdu poet may have his moments of joy in life, but for the most part he is weary and dispirited, dragging the heavy chains ~~chains~~ of circumstance and looking wistfully to the day of deliverance. When Heine says:

Sweet is sleep, but death is sweeter;  
Best of all it is, never to be born,

he voices the most cherished wishes of the Urdu poets.<sup>1</sup> Life to them seemed a miserable mistake and the effort to make the best of a bad job.

This was still another cause which accentuated this tendency Urdu poetry developed in the period which saw the political, moral and spiritual disintegration of Muslim India.<sup>2</sup> The poets lived and moved and had their being in the valley of the shadow of despair. Predisposed as they were to gloom and morbidness, their environment strengthened their natural bias.

#### IV.

In Lucknow, the other important centre of Urdu poetry, it was different. Here the ostensible signs of prosperity made them shut their eyes to the gloom that surrounded them. To

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I.Cf.Sophocoles.

2.I8th.century,vide infra.

II.

escape from the realities of life they gave themselves up to licentiousness. The degeneracy of the Oudh Court has its parallel in the orgies of the Court of Charles the Second. All the vices of a depraved society having found free and wide scope permeated the whole nation. All this was reflected in the poetry of the School. It is divorced from decency and in Inshā, Rangīn Jān Sāhib and Mirzā Shauq it is positively obscene.

V.

The love of Urdu poetry whether philosophic or erotic is morbid. I have already discussed the negation of life so popular with the Indian poets and philosophers. It kills all interest in life and becomes the greatest engine of social injustice. But no less unwholesome is the love of erotic literature. It would take me far afield to discuss at length the genesis of Urdu love poetry. Like most other things it was imported from Persia where the pederastic conception of love is the chief if not the only conception. And this to a great extent goes to explain the predominance of the physical aspect of love, the concentration on the hatred, rivalries and jealousies of the lovers and the description of the beloved as frigid, unfeeling and treacherous with a positive preference for a host of rivals. Again the deity that the lover adores is one whose presence paralyses the faculties and drains away all energy. The lover maintains a passive attitude; he submits to the strangest vagaries of the beloved who stands in the same relation to him as do the female spider or the praying mantis to their respective males. Sex cannibalism is her(or his) monopoly. She is heartless, callous, idol-like; the lover moody and athirst for martyrdom,

pires with passion and falls at her feet like a fakir at the feet of Juggernaut. To quote Prof. Sādiq,

"Love does not come to the Urdū poets as a divine gift, an elevating passion which lifts man and woman above the sordid and paltry interests into a high and refined atmosphere of nobility and self-sacrifice. It is felt to be a disease, an enervating visitation that incapacitates one for everything except the luxury of grief...The love in Urdū poetry is represented as a purely physical passion and poetry lingers much more on its pains and despair than on its joyful aspects."<sup>1</sup>

The minds of the poets are thus feminine, sentimental and sickly. They are clear malformations from which resulted such subversions of values which are more properly called perversions

But Urdū love poetry suffers from another and a greater defect. It is insincere. We do not come across songs suggested to the poet by some strong inner emotion. In this it much resembles the Thirteenth century poetry of the Sicilian School which is a slavish imitation of the models elaborated by the Provençal minstrels (Troubadours). The lyrics of the Urdū poets show the adaption of ready-made attitudes. The beloved of whom they sing is more an abstraction than a reality. The soul of the poet is absent and only the intellect is active.

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1. Mian Muhammad Sādiq, M.A., Montmorency College, Shahpur (Punjab): "Modern Urdu Literature" (Unpublished).
2. This conception of love reflects to a great extent the "agony of romanticism" and resembles the Decadent Romanticism of Merimée, Sue, Gautier, Flaubert, Swinburne and others in their worship of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". Happily Urdū poetry is free from their worst excesses of incest, rape, hermaphroditism and algolognicism, though that aspect of sadism which is seen in the love of the beauty of Medusa is frequently met with in some of the romances.

The prosodical system of Urdu poetry is the wholesale incorporation of the Persian system which in its turn is of Arabian origin.<sup>1</sup> It is a fairly elaborate scheme of standard measures consisting of the root "fa'la". These prosodical patterns are fixed and admit of no alteration. Each pattern is divided into a determined number of long and short syllables, following each other in a particular order which again is fixed and in which no relaxation is permissible. Nor has the poet any liberty to invent new patterns. The system is quantitative and resembles the Classical French, except that in the latter the variation in stresses and the harmony and contrast of vowel music enables the poet to avoid monotony which is inevitable in such a system.

Another notable feature is the insistence on 'Radif'\_double or feminine rhyme\_ which was superimposed by the Persians. In Urdu it became the criterion of mastery and greatness to employ long and difficult 'radifs' like:

تقریباً آئینہ - تہریش آئینہ ، نیک نہیں ہے بار بار ، گاہ فریب و گاہ یار - نظر آئینہ شہ ،  
 قمر و صدارت تہ چراغ - معن و صواب تہ چراغ - خورشید کی آئینہ - عورت کی آئینہ -

which prohibit spontaneity. Some of them, like

جس کی کسی - محل کی کسی - برجیس کی ٹوپی - ابلیس کی ٹوپی - گس کی تیلیاں - مس کی تیلیاں

were highly unpoetic and betrayed positively bad taste.

The forms in Urdu poetry are again based on the Arabo-Persian system with its two distinct rhyme schemes-the mono-rhyme and  
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 I. Urdu did take up a few Hindi metres.

the double-rhyme. The first, in which a single rhyme runs throughout the poem, is purely Arabian. The two opening hemistichs and every alternate thereafter rhyme.<sup>1</sup>The most typical form constructed on this system is "Qasīda"(Purpose Poem which is generally "Madhiyya"(panegyric), "Hajaiyya"(Satiric) or "Marsia"(Elegiac). In the opening lines called "Tashbīb" (Exhordium) the poet has full liberty to display his personality. The skill of the poet is seen in his escape (gurez or makhlaṣ) from the "tashbīb" to the "Maqsūd"(purpose). The concluding verses are devoted to prayer for the long life and prosperity of the patron(mamdūh).

Urdu "Qasīdās" are mostly panegyric. There is less of poetry in them than of rhetorical display of vocabulary. Ornate and artificial, they lack human robustness, imagination or passion. No doubt some of them excel in exquisiteness of workmanship, but the appeal is merely verbal. The worth of the "Qasīda" was unfortunately judged by the pomp and splendour of the diction, with the result that very often we find in them "little more than a string of turgid and bombastic epithets, the resonance and grandiloquence of which fail to conceal the banality and insincerity beneath." The eulogistic portion is mostly so amazing in its unexpectedness that the wonder is not so much that it should have been written as that it should have been thought of.

The "Tashbīb" if it dealt with the amorous adventures of the poet was called "Naṣīb" and was later developed by the Persians  
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I. The first line is called "Maṭlā" and there can be more than one.

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into a separate form called "ghazal". Originally the maximum and the minimum number of the lines was fixed but Urdu poets ignored the restriction and wrote "do-ghazlās" and "sih-ghazlās" to establish their mastery.

Ghazal literally means "amorous talk with women" and is supposed to be a love-lyric. In practice the poet can say anything and everything without any restriction even to the extent of self-contradiction. As a rule it is a mere collection of verses, each having no connection with its neighbours and all bound together by the thinnest string of the community of "Qāfīa" (rhyme) and "Radīf" (feminine rhyme).

The ghazal has been the most popular form in Urdu and is the direct outcome of the mental characteristic of the people who are given to piecemeal thinking and are deficient in the power of taking a general view, in the gift of large and logical thought and in co-ordination. Indian genius is essentially miniature and is manifested alike in painting and poetry. Even in music the grand-souled symphonies of a Beethoven or a Bach are conspicuous by their absence, and the greatest of masters lack controlling design and harmony, so that their songs have no beginning, no climax and no end.

The only other form based on the mono-rhyme system is the "Qitā" (Fragment) which is much the same as the ghazal except that it has no "matlā". It is to be noted that this form was always devoted to the development of one emotional experience; but then there are very few "Qitās" in Urdu.

The double-rhyme system is purely Persian. In it the two

hemistichs of each verse rhyme with each other without any reference to the other verses in the poem. The form is thus like the Heroic Couplet of Pope except that there is no restriction to a fixed metre. The form is employed in long romances, mystical and didactic poems, historical chronicles and epics. All such poems are called "Maṣnavīs".

Urdu poetry started with Maṣnavīs which are either religious or love romances with a great admixture of the supernatural. In Mīr and Saudā the note of realism and subjectivity is observable here and there. Most of these Maṣnavīs do little to stir our sympathies. The religious ones fail, as a rule, in their professed object—the liberation of the moral impulses or the instruction of the intellect. They are insipid and puerile and have no thought or scheme of thought to unfold. In romances the story is reduced to the extreme tenuity as the poem proceeds. In some of the Maṣnavīs, like Gulzār-i-Nasīm, the object is to "surprise the reader with fine excess." There is a chaos of promiscuous ornament and the desire to secure verbal effect even at the cost of thought spoils the charm of the story.

Of the "Stanza" forms the most known is "Rubāī" (Quatrain) and has been made familiar to the readers by Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayam. The form is the slightest and resembles the charming little genre-pictures, thus proving the talent of the Persians for miniature painting. It can deal with any subject and has by its very nature a forcefulness that cannot be secured by any other form. The last line contains the sting of the idea which reminds the reader of the sharp jerk in the

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second shorter line of the Greek epigram. The importance of Rubāī lies in its being intensely subjective: it lays bear the soul.

Of the various other stanza forms "Tarkīb Band"(Composite-Tie), "Tarjī Band"(Return-Tie), "Mukhammas"(Five-Line Stanza) and "Musaddas"(Six-Line Stanza) are more known. Tarkib Band consists of a number of stanzas, each of equal number of lines, in ghazal form. The various stanzas are linked together by varying rhymed couplets in the same metre. The form was sparingly used by the Classicals. If the connecting line, called "Wāsīṭa"(Refrain or Tie) is unvarying, the form is called Tarjī Band.

Of the other stanza forms the Musaddas is the most important for it was the only one to acquire popularity by being taken up by the "marsīa-writers" of whom Anīs and Dabīr are by far the greatest. The "marsīas" mourn the martyrdom of Imām Husain at Karbala but unfortunately suffer from the absence of constructional development.

The rhyme scheme in Musaddas is aaaabb. Allowing for the power of a genius who can use any form successfully, it is not very incorrect to say that Musaddas, though rigid and hide-bound, permits the easy flow of narrative.

Chapter  
II.

The New Tide.

A new era dawned with the advent of the Nineteenth century. when the boundaries of knowledge and experience widened under the influence of fresh and invigorating forces. The emasculated spirit of India, galvanised by the inspiration of inviting possibilities and a new life, leapt forward to activity. It was an era of intellectual emancipation and brought with it new attitudes, new outlooks, and new aspirations. This great cultural reorganisation was the outcome of the penetration of the West which actually dates back to the middle of the Fifteenth century but became effectively operative after the lapse of two hundred years, when the triumph of English diplomacy succeeded in the elimination of other rivals and left the field open to them for territorial expansion.

The impact of the two civilisations, quite alien to each other and determined by diametrically opposite ideals and concepts of values, necessitated a new orientation and the readjustment of the customs and ways of life in their intimate as well as their public aspects. This intellectual awakening, in so far as it is "the passage from the mediaeval asceticism to the self-expression and self-cultivation of the humanist ideal," has rightly been called 'Renaissance'—Re-birth; but its magnitude—it is made up of such varied constituents—religious Reformation, industrial revolution, nationalism, development of vernacular literature, the emergence of a whole system of

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personal responsibilities and social activities, all operating simultaneously and the far-reaching results outflowing from it, are of such a vast nature and such deep significance that it far outweighs the European movement from which it takes its name.

What is the nature of this new culture from the West? How did it differ from the Oriental conception of life and art? How did India, particularly Muslim India, react to it? The answer to these questions is necessary: Hali is the product of the conflict of the two cultures. His task was the revaluation of mediaeval values.

## II.

Western culture, in the sense in which we use the term, is something essentially modern and of very recent growth. When the intellectual life of Islam stagnated, yielding to the deadening forces of mysticism and conservatism, Europe took up the torch of learning and made great strides in the development of sciences and mechanical inventions. Their growth was accelerated by a quick succession of world-changing events—the discovery of new routes, the Renaissance, the printing-press, the Protestant revolt against the monastic and static philosophy of religion and the French and Industrial Revolutions.

In the physical world its greatest achievement is the conquest of nature, time and distance by various mechanical inventions which has resulted in the shrinkage of the world, the quick diffusion and penetration of this culture and the transformation of man's relations with man.

To sum up: Western culture is dominated by a dynamic philosophy of change. It lays stress upon action, progress and accomplishment. It is essentially this-worldly in outlook, exalts the individual and relies upon scientific methodology for the comprehension of man and universe.

### III.

How did India react to this new invading culture? The problem is complex and not easy to answer: India is a vast continent, inhabited by different races, representing widely different cultural patterns. The degree of response, therefore, could not be uniform. Again, the different parts of the country did not come in contact with this culture at the same time, and in some provinces, as in the Panjab, the modern influences began to work only in the latter half of the century. The assimilation of the new culture was, therefore, confined in the beginning to border regions and a few pioneer individuals. It, however, spread rapidly inwards and downwards, so that it soon permeated wider and wider sections in every province.

But before I proceed to answer the question I must give a brief account of the channels through which this culture spread.

### IV.

The modernisation of India began with the Serampore Mission of William Carey and his co-adjutors, Ward and Marshman. Not allowed to settle in Calcutta by the British authorities on account of political considerations, they established a Protestant Mission in the Danish territory and started a College in 1793. They also opened a number of schools.

They were followed by David Hare, a rationalist, who had a

scheme for the establishment of a college for "sons of respectable Hindus" and was accorded an enthusiastic welcome by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the first apostle of enlightenment in India. As a result of their joint efforts, the Vidyāla, afterwards the Hindu College and finally the Presidency College, was established in Calcutta in 1800. It was a free-thinking institution where particular attention was devoted to the broadening of the vision and the training of the critical faculty.

The same year saw the establishment of Fort William College by Wellesley for the training of English civilians.

The British Government was so far averse to the introduction of any system of education, for it was feared that a more enlightened state of mind would make the people sensible of their power and alive to their rights.<sup>1</sup> Others, however, thought differently. Most prominent of them was Charles Grant, a retired civilian, who started a movement in 1793 to bring about a change in this policy. He wrote a valuable treatise, entitled, "Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to Morals, and on Means of improving it,"<sup>2</sup> and induced William Wilberforce, the great philanthropist, to use his influence in the Parliament to procure the insertion of such clauses in the Charter of the

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 I. There was no system of <sup>State</sup> education in these days even in England and for the same reasons. author

2. The sole object of the ~~reader~~ is the education and the proselytisation of the Hindus. The book offers an interesting study of the social life of the period.

East India Company (then before the Parliament for the decennial renewal) as may empower the Court of Directors to send and maintain teachers and missionaries to India for the moral and intellectual education of its peoples. The attempt failed but the public conscience was awakened and acquired so great a momentum that when the Charter was renewed in 1813, Wilberforce and Grant secured full freedom for the missionaries to settle in India. "A sum of no less than a lakh of rupees" was also to be sanctioned annually for the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of scientific studies.

There was a great influx of missionary societies of different denominations with the removal of the ban and propaganda centres were extended all over the country. Of these Allahabad, Mirzapur, Bareilly, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi and Ludhiana were more important. Schools, boarding-houses, orphanages, refuges, homes and medical dispensaries were opened. The press was fully utilised and hundreds of pamphlets and books were published and sometimes freely distributed. Social intercourse was encouraged with the people and contact was secured with the Zenana through women-missionaries. There was hardly any class of society, therefore, which was not touched. The Church of England alone opened twenty schools and in 1820 was founded Bishop's College, Calcutta, by public subscriptions raised in England.

Progress was in the air and well-to-do Indians came forward to help the rejuvenation and advancement of their country. Hājī Muhammad Muhsin, a great scholar and traveler of Calcutta, gave away, in 1806, the whole of his property, then representing

Rs.45000/- (and now several times over) to various charities, particularly education, by a Trust Deed. The major portion of the amount was applied to the Hoogli College. Among the Hindus, Pandit Ganga Dhar of Agra founded and liberally endowed a College in that historic city in 1823 and thus created a centre of modern culture in the very heart of India. It was followed in 1827 by the famous Delhi College. The first institution to have a direct influence on the Muslims, it helped to create a healthy atmosphere for the Islamic Renaissance. Almost all the leaders of the Aligarh Movement<sup>1</sup> and the creators of modern Urdu literature are the product of this College.

In 1829 landed in Calcutta Alexander Duff, a man who was destined to revolutionise the education ~~policy~~ of the country. So far the subjects were taught through the medium of the Oriental languages and English was treated as a subsidiary language. Duff decided to open an English school, giving out that "nothing would do so much for the opening of the Hindu mind as intercourse with the spirit of the West through the medium of English language." He found a supporter in Raja Ram Mohan Roy who placed some rooms at his disposal to enable him to give a practical shape to his scheme. The school attracted quite a number of students and was a great success from the missionary point of view for there were many conversions.

So far the Government had not laid down a definite policy of education and a chaos of systems prevailed. The consolidation of the Empire, which had by no means reached its natural limits had not yet begun and the attention of the authorities was  
I, Vide infra.

absorbed in wars, important and pressing political affairs and the maintenance of peace and order. The first respite came when Lord Bentinck assumed the charge of his office as Governor General in 1828. He was a courageous and zealous reformer and at once set himself to the great task of the spiritual and moral uplift of the country. He was horrified to hear of the barbaric practices of 'Sati', female infanticide, 'thagī', torture, mutilation and human-sacrifice, and made a spirited endeavour to rid India of these moral and social plagues. Thagī was suppressed with a strong hand and the other evils were declared criminal offences.

His next concern was education which had by now become a political matter of vital importance. He feared that the diffusion of knowledge and the operations of press would enlighten the Indian mind and thus "weaken the respect entertained for the European character." He, therefore, appointed Lord Macaulay (1834) the Chairman of the Committee of Public Instruction to consider the problem and submit a report about the education system most suited to the country. There were two schools of thought at the time—the Orientalists and the Anglicists. The Orientalists were for the encouragement of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit, and prophesied that the introduction of Western sciences and thought in India would inevitably bring about the political ruin of the English power. Others, like Meredith Townsend, were of opinion that "all efforts to modify Indian thought and behaviour was absolutely hopeless."

The Anglicists were for what is called the "Filtration theory

the education of the people (though the medium of English) who would in their turn translate Western literature and sciences into the vernaculars and thus diffuse knowledge among the masses. Belonging to the Liberal school of thought, they believed with Helvetius and Cabanis that the study of English and the modern knowledge of natural sciences would transform the Indian into an Englishman and create a class "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." The ideal was to Anglicise India as Rome had Latinised Gaul and Iberia. This, it was urged, would be one of the most useful instruments in the imperial policy of penetration and domination.<sup>1</sup>

Bentinck gave entire concurrence to the view and the imperial policy was definitely formulated. "India was to be a link in the great Empire on which the sun would never set. Europeanisation was to bring about her complete acquiescence in the Pax Britannica. With the understanding of Western ideals she would appreciate all the more the inestimable benefits of British rule."<sup>2</sup>

The Government of Lord Hastings notified in 1844 that "candidates qualified by a knowledge of English would be preferred for public service." The economic motive, thus, further encouraged the study of English.

The education of the girls had not been ignored by the missionaries but it was throughout on a minor scale. The first

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1. See "Asia Reborn": Marguerite Harrison; Harper & Brothers, London, 1928, and "A History of Nationalism in the East": Hans Kohn, translated by Margaret M. Green; George Routledge, London, 1929.

2. "Asia Reborn", p. 14. Op. Cit.

important school for girls was started by J.E.D.Bethune, a retired civilian, in 1849, in Calcutta.

A number of medical and engineering schools were also opened of which the Medical College, Calcutta, and Thomason Engineering College, Rurki (1847), are more important.

Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch of 1853 brought about a further change in the policy but since it came in force after the Mutiny (1857) it need not be considered here.

It is clear from the above account that the education policy of the Government has been strongly marked by what the psychology calls ambivalence: it aimed at subduing the minds to a particular pattern and at the same time endeavoured to release them from the sterilising influences of tradition and convention and encouraged them to develop those distinctive features which constitute their individuality.

The system and its results can be best described in the words of Mayhew who says:

"It is a rambling and unfinished house, showing signs everywhere of change of plans during construction, but with all its defects, habitable and capable at any time of modifications and expansion. It has stimulated vitality of all kinds, religious, commercial, social and political."<sup>1</sup>

#### V.

Such is the history of educational Missions and the new educational system prior to the Mutiny. But the institution which contributed most to the acceleration of the processes of rejuvenation and the diffusion of modern culture was the press. The first printing machine was set up by the famous Orientalist Sir Charles Wilkins in Calcutta, in 1778. The Caxton of Bengal, he instructed an Indian blacksmith Panchanan in type-cutting I. Arthur Innes Mayhew: "Education of India", 1926.

and all the later type-cutting, therefore, was derived from him. The first book to be printed was Halhed's Bengali Grammar. At about the same time a press was started by one Rustamji, a pārsī, in Bombay.<sup>1</sup>

The first newspaper to appear in India was Hickey's Bengal Gazette, started on 29th January, 1780. It was followed by the India Gazette (November, 1780), the Calcutta Gazette (February, 1784) and some other journals. The Government being professedly despotic and suspicious was naturally against all journalistic activity and openly discouraged it. The scurrilous tone of some of these papers afforded Lord Wellesley a pretext for introducing harsh regulations and creating a censorship.<sup>2</sup>

There was hardly a chance for the Indian press under these circumstances and so when the Serampore missionaries sent out a feeler-"Digdarsan"<sup>3</sup> in April, 1818, they expected a sharp reproof from the Government. To their surprise it was received with favour and so the first Indian weekly, "Samāchār Darpan", was started under the editorship of James Clark Marshman, on 23rd. May, 1818.\* It continued till 1840 and proved one of the most effective channels for the spread of general information and the diffusion of modern knowledge.

1. As a matter of fact the press was first introduced into India by the Jesuits with the establishment of a printing machine at St. Paul's College, Goa, in 1557, and the first book published on the Indian soil was a Christian catechism in Conconi (Roman character) by St. Francis Xavier. A press was also established in Bengal and number of books, both religious and secular, were written in Bengali by Portuguese writers of whom Manoel da Assumpção is most important. But the Jesuits failed in naturalising, as it were, the press to India. The Portuguese lacked vision, sympathy and character and their ruthless massacres of the Muslims and mass conversions at the points of bayonets, could not create that healthy atmosphere which alone can secure a response for the assimilation of an alien culture and the adoption of foreign institutions.

2. 13th May, 1799.

3. A Bengali Monthly

\*The honour of the first Indian newspaper is, however, due to the  
(next page) *Bangla gazette (1816) of Banga Kishore.*

With the succession of Lord Hastings there came a change in the policy of the Government. A man of liberal views, he believed that a good government had nothing to fear from public opinion and removed all censorship from the press. The measure encouraged the appearance of a number of English and vernacular papers and magazines. Here too Raja Ram Mohan Roy gave the lead. Realising the importance of press as an educative force he started his Bengali weekly Sambat Kaumudī on 4th December, 1821, for the reform of Hindu society. The paper played not an inconsiderable part in the awakening of Bengal and was the first herald of the Indian Renaissance. Encouraged by its success he started his Persian "Mirat-ul-Akḥbār", on 28th March, 1822, for the intellectual classes. The articles appearing in this paper were highly critical and in the words of such an eminent authority as Mountstuart Elphinstone, enabled the people "to discover curiosity and interest about the form of their government as well as its proceedings, together with a strong spirit of reform as applied to the sciences, religion, and moral of their nation."<sup>1</sup> The paper was bold in its criticism of the Government and certain Christian doctrines for which Mr W.B. Bayl made a strong report against it in his minute about the Indian press delivered in the Calcutta Council on 10th October, 1822.

The first Urdu paper, "Jām-i-Jahān Numā", was the property of an English commercial house of Calcutta, and appeared from that city in 1822 under the editorship of Lāla Sada Sukha and W.H. Pearce. It had also a Persian section.

Then came the reversal of the Government policy. The Anglo-Indian bureaucracy was intolerant of informed criticism and  
 1. Sir T.E. Colebrooke: "Life of the Hon'ble Mountstuart Elphinstone (1884) II, p. 135.

immediately after the retirement of Lord Hastings, his successor the Acting Governor-General, J. Adam, passed, on 14th March, 1823, a rigorous Press Ordinance. Its first victim was Mirat-ul-Akhbār. The extent to which the press was able to awaken the Indian mind can be well judged from the famous Memorial<sup>1</sup> of Raja Ram Mohan Roy to the Supreme Court in defence of the press, about which Miss Dobson correctly observes that it "may be regarded as the Areopagitica of Indian history," adding that "alike in diction and in argument it forms a noble landmark in the progress of English culture in the East."<sup>2</sup>

It was only in September, 1835, that the restrictions were removed by another liberal Governor-General, Sir Charles Metcalfe. In the same year Urdu was declared the court language in supersession of Persian. Press had in the meanwhile penetrated inward and the first purely Urdu paper was started in Delhi by Muhammad Baqar, father of Muhammad Husain Azad, in 1836. It regularly appeared till the Mutiny. From the same town appeared, in 1837, Sayyid-ul-Akhbār, under the editorship of Sayyid Muhammad, elder brother of Sir Sayyid.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See "The English Works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy" (Panini Office ed pp. 437-443 and 445-467).

2. The other notable papers of this period are:

1. Bengali Herald (Calcutta, 5th May, 1829) edited by Robert Montgomery. It appeared in English, Persian, Bengali and Nagri. Ram Mohan Roy had relations with it.

2. Samāchār Sabha (Calcutta, 7th September, 1830). Edited by Shaikh Alīm Ullah. It appeared in Bengali and Persian.

3. Māh-i-Ālam Firūz (Calcutta, 22nd March, 1833). A Persian paper edited by Wihāj-ud-Din.

4. Sultān-ul-Akhbār (Calcutta, 2nd August, 1835) A Persian paper edited by Ghulām Husain.

5. Sirāj-ul-Akhbār (Delhi, 1841). The property of the last Emperor of Delhi.

6. Mihr-i-Munīr (Calcutta, May, 1841). A Persian bi-weekly.

3. Vide infra.

The other pre-Mutiny papers appearing from Northern India were "Fawāid-ul-Nazarīn" (Delhi-1842) of Ram Chandra, "Qirān-us-Sādāin" (1846) of Pandit Dharam Narāin of Gwalior, and "Koh-i-Nūr" (Lahore-1850) of Munshī Harsukh Rai. The last mentioned was patronised by the administrative officers of the Pānjab and helped in the intellectual improvement of the province. The paper of Ram Chandra was more intellectual in its aims and discussed scientific and literary subjects.

#### VI.

Even before the missionaries and the press, the activities of the Orientalists who were to prove the ambassadors of inter-racial and inter-cultural understandings, had started. The first impetus to the study of Oriental culture was given by Warren Hastings. Under his orders the Hindu Law was codified and translated into English (1776). This created an interest in the study of Hindu thought and literature. In 1785 appeared Charles Wilkin's Bhagavad Gīta and in 1789 Sir William Jones' translation of Sakuntala. In 1794 he founded the Bengal Asiatic Society whose activities led to the revival of Oriental studies and had the same effect on that Province which the revival of Greek learning had in Europe. Intellectual curiosity was awakened and scholars of Benares<sup>1</sup> began to study Latin and Greek for purposes of comparative study.

The other great Orientalists of the period were Colebrooke, Tod, Wilson, Macdonnal, Hamilton, and later, Max Müller. Prinsep  
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I. Jonathan Duncan had established here the Sanskrit College in 1792.

and Cunningham devoted themselves to the study of Indian art, epigraphy and archaeology. Of course their researches did not reach the masses but they deeply stirred the intelligentsia.

## VII

When two alien civilisations, opposed to each other in their ideals, are forced to come in intimate contact, the problem of cultural conflict and readjustment is inevitable. Its nature, however, differs according as the invaded civilisation, happens to be free from foreign political domination and is able to control the processes of cultural evolution or not. Here, too, the existence or the absence of a strong ruling body or effective leadership is a factor which is always of vital importance.<sup>1</sup> In the case of national consciousness the resistance to the foreign culture is, no doubt, natural; but when the invaded culture has not the stamina to face and stem the onslaught of the invading culture, or the national spirit is somnolent and in putrescent stages of consciousness, or again it feels that it is essentially inferior and out-of-date and is inadequate to meet new and more complex situations, it either passively submits to the new civilisation or consciously, but independently, replaces its own social and political institutions by new forms and new ways to avoid the greater danger of political subjugation.

Cultural response under these circumstances always represent one of the two main types, that of "centralised control" as in the case of Japan and Turkey, where a nation-wide adaptation to

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I. In the case of response or antagonism to the new culture, it is also to be seen whether the invaded civilisation is in a fluid state and is, therefore, easily susceptible to change, or is it rigid and conservative.

the new civilisation was rapidly imposed by a strong ruling class<sup>1</sup> or that of "diffused assimilation and permeation" as in China. Here the cultural adjustment takes the form either of unconscious adaptations through what may be called "long-exposure" or of conscious reform under the guidance of national leaders, effected through persuasion and education. The process is, no doubt, slow, piecemeal, sometimes wasteful and often lacking in co-ordination, but it has always the advantage of being voluntary and evolutionary and has no fear of such disasters as witnessed in Afghanistan during the regime of Aman Ullah.

The problem of India, however, is unique. The first to come in contact with the West, it is not only politically subordinate to the invading culture but represents within itself varied cultural patterns of which the Hindu and the Islamic are the major. The Muslims, who had been on the downward path, both politically and morally, during the 18th century, suddenly awakened to their serious situation in the beginning of the 19th century, simultaneously with the penetration of the new culture, and offered serious resistance to it. For the Hindus, who had been politically subordinate for about a thousand years and whose values, at the time, were governed by economic considerations, it was the choice between two foreign cultures<sup>2</sup> and they, therefore, willingly yielded to the new. But even in their case the problem of cultural readjustment was by no means

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1. The ruling military class of Daimys and Samutaris in Japan and the Kemalist Party in Turkey.

2. Sir William Wilson Hunter: "The Indian Musalmans: Are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?"; London, Trubner & Co., 1871, pp. 174-175.

so simple. Wedded to time-old traditions which had acquired religious sanctity, they were not willing to accept any modification in their institutions and thus the Government had to legislate to put an end to those more hideous and revolting as Sati, infanticide and human-sacrifice. <sup>1</sup>In other cases reform was effected through gradual assimilation. The type of response therefore, was the combination of "centralised control" and "diffused penetration and permeation."

The foreign domination also affected the cultural response and conflict of the Hindus and the Muslims in another way. Imperialistic considerations for the perpetuation of political dominance necessitated that the Muslims should be made to go down and the Hindus be encouraged to rise up. To effectively secure the object the Muslims were debarred from all offices till in the words of Dr.Hunter "a people of great traditions were without a career"<sup>2</sup> and could not hope for "any post above the rank of porter, or filler of inkpots, and mender of pens,"<sup>3</sup> There was thus no economic motive with them to acquire the new education. Further, their educational institutions were denuded of funds (auqāf) which were misappropriated for Hindu education. The activities of the non-officials, as I have shown in the case of Carey, Grant and Duff, were also centred in fostering the education of the Hindus.<sup>5</sup>

The policy of the Government did not stop here. The Muslims were excluded from the Oriental journals and libraries. The

1.Vide supra.

2."The Indian Musalmans":p.I49.Op.Cit.

3.Ibid.p.I67.

4.The Muhsin Trust was applied to Presidency College, a predominantly Hindu institution, and not to the Muhammadan Madrisa. The same was the case with Itimād-ud-Daula Fund in the Panjab.

5.Vide supra.

Court of Directors ordered that no money be spent on research in Semitic culture and Dr. Roer, in charge of the Asiatic Society from 1847-52, and after him Wilson, Goldstücker, Aufrecht, Hall and others rigorously enforced it so that Arabic was completely ignored.<sup>1</sup> Their activities were devoted to Sanskrit and the Muslims were led to believe that their culture was in danger of extinction. Their resistance to the new culture was, therefore, based not on their bigotry and narrow-mindedness but was partly the outcome of the policy of the Government and partly due to the religious reformation and national awakening brought about by ShāhĀbdul Āzīz the Sun of India and others.

## IX.

The Moghal Empire had been decaying in India ever since the death of Aurangzeb (1707) but so effective had been his control that it was not perceptible during the reign of his successors. It was, however, shaken to its very foundations when Nadir Shah sacked Delhi in 1739. The distant provinces like Hyderabad and Oudh declared their independence. The Marhattas were already independent in the South. The Sikhs became more turbulent in the Punjab and Ranjit Singh carved out a kingdom for himself by taking advantage of the generosity of Shah Zaman. During the years 1772-1785, the period of the premiership of Mirza Najaf Khan, "the sun of fortune emerged from the storm clouds of the mid century and cast a pale evening glimmer upon the Moghal throne. Then it finally went down behind the thundercloud of the Rohilla invasion amid the blinding lightning glare of Ghulam Qadir's ferocity." The Emperor was blinded and dethroned and the royal ladies subjected to the grossest insults. The

rescue came from the Scindhia who assumed a protectorate of Delhi and thus reduced the Moghal enclave to the level of a puppet sovereignty.

At this time the British diplomacy under Lord Wellesly sought to utilise the Moghal name in the war with the Marhattas. The Emperor, who was far from happy under the Scindhia, welcomed Lord Lake's army when it entered the Capital in 1803, and with it ended the Empire of Akbar. The farce was, however, kept up, for though rulers de facto, the English did not deem it politic to assume the status of rulers de jure. It was feared that any haste in the assumption of the insignia of sovereignty would result in the rising of the Muslims, it being their duty to shake off the infidel rule. India was, therefore, allowed to pass "from a Country of Islam into a Country of the Enemy by absolutely imperceptible gradations."<sup>1</sup>

There were some, however, who were acute enough to detect the change. Most important of these was the family of the famous "Muhaddis" Shāh Walī Ullah of Delhi. A profound scholar of liberal views, he was deeply impressed with the refrigeration of religious emotions and the decay of the Muslim power and started the great movement of Muslim regeneration and reformation with his famous commentary, "Hujjat-ul-Bāligha" (1735) and the translation of the Quran in Persian (1737). His sons Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz (d. 1824), Shāh Rafī-ud-Dīn (1749-1818) and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir  
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 I. For detailed study see "The Indian Musalmans", pp. 134-136. Op. C

(1753-1815) followed in his footsteps. Ábdul Ázīz wrote "Izalat-ul-Khafā" and each of the other two translated the Qurān in Urdu.<sup>1</sup> Sayyid Abdulla, one of their devoted disciples, published the translation of Shāh Ábdul Qādir in Hugli in 1829 and thus for the first time the Muslim masses in India were able to understand the text of their Holy Book. Great was the change it wrought. Islam began to awaken from the lethargy in which, like Christianity before the Reformation, it was sunk. The movement, now called "Targhib-i-Muhammadiyya" (The Call to the Muslims) became a vitalising force by the beginning of the 19th century under the leadership of Shāh Ábdul Ázīz. Finding that the success of his cause required an enthusiastic and fiery spirit at its head to galvanise the people into activity, he converted Sayyid Aḥmad Brelvi, a Pindar chief, and sent him forth as a preacher after a three years' novitiate. Shāh Ismā'īl the son-in-law, and Shāh Ábdul Ḥayy, the nephew of Shāh Ábdul Ázīz, both scholars of great merit, publicly accepted Sayyid Aḥmad as their spiritual guide and as a man sent by God to accomplish the task of Muslim regeneration. This attracted popular attention to the future leader who toured throughout the country, appointed Spiritual Viceregents and Propaganda Centres (with Patna as Headquarters) and levied ecclesiastical taxation. By 1820 the movement was on a sound footing with an organisation as complete and thorough as that of an established government.

The teachings of the new apostle were simple. He abstained

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I. Rafī-ud-Dīn's translation is literal while that of Ábdul Qādir is in simple, idiomatic, everyday speech. It was completed in 1803 and is called Mauziḥ-ul-Quran.

from all doctrinal discussions and devoted himself exclusively to practical problems of everyday life, exhorting his hearers to live better lives, to believe in the Unity of God and the Equality of Man, and to discard the supersititious accretions which they had borrowed from the Hindus. It was an attempt to restore Islam to its pristine simplicity.<sup>1</sup>

In 1822 Sayyid Ahmad went to Mecca and came in contact with Wahabism, a similar movement of reformation started in Arabia by 'Abdul Wahhāb of Najd, in the middle of the 18th century, to revive Islam as a living force. When Sayyid Ahmad returned to India he was a transformed man. He was no longer contented with mere preaching. Something bold was to be undertaken to regain Muslim glory. His efforts from now on tended to two directions: to reform Islam from within and to restore the Muslim political power by the expulsion of the English and the repudiation of European influence.<sup>2</sup> Starting with the intensification and vitalisation of religious life, he and his supporters<sup>3</sup> roused the Muslims to self-consciousness and national and political re-birth.

'Abdul Āzīz and 'Abdul Hayy gave 'fatwās' (religious decrees) that India was no longer a land of Islam but was "Dār-ul-Harb" (The Land of War) and that it was the duty of every Muslim to expel the intruders. A mass of literature was produced and

1. See Calcutta Review, April, 1870, No. c for detailed study.

2. It was also a part of the programme to rid the Panjab of the Sikhs and they actually started with them by the conquest of Peshawar and the surrounding area. Titū Miān led the revolt against the English in Bengal in the thirties.

3. Prominent among them were Shāh Ismā'īl Shāhīd, Shāh 'Abdul Hayy, Ināyāt Alī, Wilāyat Alī, Muḥammad Ishāq, Muḥammad Yāqūb, Maulvī Abdullah, Hājī Ismā'īl, Karāmat Alī and Zain-ul-Ābidīn.

everywhere the Muslim population was stirred to its depth.<sup>1</sup> A number of popular songs were also composed to intensify the spirit of national consciousness and to impress upon the hearers that it was the first duty of a regenerate to lay down his life for his cause. The following lines from one of the songs indicate the nature of the appeal:

"War against the infidel is incumbunt on all Musalmans; make provision for it before all things.  
 He who from his heart gives one farthing to the cause, shall receive hereafter seven hundred fold;  
 He who both gives and joins in the fight, shall receive seven thousand fold from God.  
 He who shall equip a warrior in this cause of God shall obtain a martyr's reward.  
 Cease to be cowards; join the divine leader, and smite the infidel.  
 Thousands go to war and come back unhurt; thousands remain at home and die.  
 You are filled with worldly cares, and have forgotten your Maker in thinking of your wives and children.  
 How long will you be able to live with your wives and children? How long to escape death?  
 Fill the uttermost ends of India with Islam, so that no sounds may be heard but "Allah! Allah!"<sup>2</sup>

The effect of the movement was great. It roused the Muslims

I. See "A History of Nationalism in the East".Op.Cit.

As regards the literature produced by the leaders of the movement Dr.Hunter remarks that "any attempt at even the briefest epitome...would fill a volume." I give ~~some~~ here a list of some of the important ones."The very titles," says Kohn,"of the books are characteristic of the spirit which produced them."

"Sirāt-ul-Mustaqīm"(The Right Path):Sayings of Sayyid Ahmad i Persian.Collected by Maulvī Muhammad Ismāīl and translated in Urdu by Maulvī Ābdul Jabbar.

"Obligation of Jihād":A Qaṣīda by Maulvi Karam Ilāhī.

A "Prophetic Poem" by Niāmat Ullah on the downfall of the English.

"Tarīkh-i-Qaisar-i-Rūm yā Miṣbāh-us-Sarīh":Life of Ābdul Wahh

"Aṣār-i-Mahshar"(The Signs of the Last Day):A poem by Maulvī Muhammad Āli(1849).

"Taqwiāt-ul-Īmān"(The Strengthner of Faith):Muhammad Ismāīl (Shāh-i-Shahīd)

"Tazkirat-ul-Akhwī"(Brotherly Talks) do

"Nasihāt-ul-Momin"(Advice to Muslims):Maulvī Karam Ālī,Cawnpo:

"Hidayat-ul-Mominin"(Guidance to Muslims):Maulvi Aulad Husain  
 "Tanbih-ul-Ghafilin"(Admonition of the Forgetful) in Urdu.

2. *Risala-e-Jihad, Calcutta Review, v ol Cii, p 396, et seq*

from the stupor in which they had sunk. In the words of Dr. Hunt "they effected one of the greatest religious revivals known to Indian history, and which has kept alive the spirit of revolt against the British rule during the fifty years."<sup>1</sup>

It would be outside the scope of this thesis to discuss the military aspects of the Crescentade that followed. Suffice it to say that it culminated in the so-called military Mutiny of 1857, which, in the words of Hans Kohn, was in fact a national war fought to secure independence.<sup>2</sup>

Thus ended Muslim resistance to the Western political and cultural dominance of India.<sup>3</sup>

The movement greatly influenced the later responsivists- Sir Sayyid, Hali, Nazir Ahmad and others. Hali was brought up and educated in the midst of this cultural conflict and was a keen student of Wahabi literature. His first book was an attempt to vindicate Wahabism. Sir Sayyid openly professed himself to be a Wahabi.

#### X.

The spirit of antagonism to the new culture to which the Muslims gave such an active expression was not the outcome of aversion to enlightenment. Shāh Ábdul Ázíz, the thinking-head of the movement, had himself issued a "fatwa" that the studying of English and the acquisition of modern knowledge were

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1. "The Indian Musalmans": p.61. Op. Cit.

2. "A History of Nationalism in the East." p.359. Op. Cit.

3 The movement did not die with the Mutiny but lived underground. See Ambala and other State Trials. Today it lives in the Colony of the Mahajirin in North Western Frontier. See "Hayat-i-Tayyiba" by Umrāo Mirzā Hairat (Delhi-1895) and "Sawānih-i-Ahmadī or Tārikh-i-Ājamiyya" by Muhammad Jāfar of Delhi for the lives of Sayyid Ahmad and Shāh Ismāil Shahīd.

compatible with the spirit and the traditions of Islam.<sup>1</sup> No doubt in the case of the masses, to whom the appeal was made in the name of religion to secure their support, the source of opposition was the final impulse of medievalism before it gave way for the new era; but with the intellectuals it was the sense of national consciousness and the desire to see that the traditions of the nobler days of a great conquering nation were not wiped out.

But in spite of their resistance the new culture did make headway. The established government has always got the vested interests on its side. Nor can we ignore the economic factor which plays not an inconsiderable part in the life and thought of a nation. The influences, therefore, which had been working in India from the beginning of the 19th century, profoundly affected certain sections of its peoples (including the Muslims). On the whole, the era was one of disintegration and readjustment. The existing institutions were being uprooted and new ones were taking their place.

The effect of this impact on the Hindus in Bengal was almost paralysing. Dazzled by the glamour of the new civilisation they endeavoured to aspire to it in their own lives and thus started ~~the started~~ the imitation of West in its unessential externalities. But along with it there grew up a band of brilliant young men who, under the leadership of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, turned their attention to the transformation of national life by a process of selection and adaptation consistent with national

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I. See "Ghadr-i-Dihli ke Asbāb" by Sir Sayyid.

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traditions and progress. A great religious and social reformation was the result of which Brahma Samaj\_a revolt against Brahmanic tyranny, dogmatism and authority\_was the first manifestation.

#### XI.

Another, and by far the more important, manifestation was the desire of self-expression in the vernaculars which brought about the democratisation of culture within bounds of possibility. The first impetus was given by William Carey and Dr. J. B. Gilchrist of the Fort William College, Calcutta. The original function of the institution was the training of the young civilians, but the range of the studies marked out for the students was so extensive that it soon became the meeting place of Western and Eastern cultures. Eminent scholars of India, employed for the teaching of the Oriental languages, came for the first time in contact with Western scholars, acquired a new vision and were induced to take up literary work in the vernaculars which they would never have done otherwise. With these publications, mostly translations from Persian, began Urdu prose which was soon to become the most important vehicle for the diffusion of Western knowledge throughout Northern India. The translation of the Bible (1805), the Quran and the encyclopaedic Arabic work "Ikhwan-us-Safa" (1801), are the most valuable contribution of this school to Urdu literature.<sup>2</sup>

A number of books were also produced by the missionaries whose proselytising activities demanded the conveyance of Christian practice and theory, to the masses in their language.<sup>3</sup>

1. Translated by Maulvi Ikram Ali.

2. See "Arbab-i-Nadr-i-Urdu" by Sayyid Muhammad Qadri, Hyderabad.

3. See Appendix I.

These were mostly translations. Polemical literature was mostly devoted to the criticism of Hinduism<sup>1</sup> because it was feared that the Muslims being more sensitive about their religion, it was impolitic to arouse their feelings. Nevertheless books like "Musalmānī Dīn kā Raddiyā (The Refutation of Islamic Faith) and "Guftgū fī Dīn-i-Islam" (Talks about Islam)<sup>2</sup>; both by John Wilson did appear but their circulation was limited to Southern India.

With the Thirties began the movement for the enrichment of Urdu literature by the newly emancipated Indians. So far the incentive was entirely external-official or missionary- but with the new learning came the desire for self-expression. The movement marks the beginning of an intense literary activity and is the first phase of the intellectual Renaissance which was to reach its culminating point<sup>3</sup> during the Seventies and the Eighties.<sup>4</sup> Like the English Renaissance it was essentially the Age of Translation. Creation was not possible; it comes with time. Most of these publications lack artistic intention and aim merely at instruction, a notable feature of the Indian Renaissance. Anyhow they have a literary value in so far as they are the earliest attempts of their kind in Urdu literature. These works are not only the index of a change of attitude, but in their turn helped to create new attitudes and cover such varied subjects as agriculture, arts and manufactures, astronomy and astrology, biography and history, games and sports, geography

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1. This was mostly in Bengali.

2. Published in 1834 (Bombay) and 1843 (Madras) 3rd. edition, respectively.

3. Of the earlier Renaissance.

4. Vide infra.

43.

and topography, law, medicine and surgery, military arts, political economy, sociology, travel and veterinary science.<sup>‡</sup>

The chief centres of this awakening were Delhi and Agra but a number of publications appeared from Bombay, Bengalore and Madras and show how quickly the language developed into the lingua franca of the country. The enthusiasm of these youngmen proved contagious and those who had not the benefit of the modern education were carried away by the zeitgeist and devote their talents to the translation of Arabic, Persian and in some cases Hindi, Tamil and Sanskrit works. These are either fiction or history and hagiography. Of course in some cases they set bad examples but they rendered the language for expression. Had he benefited not a little by this movement: he would not have found the language so pliant in his hands but for it.

## XII.

The baptism of blood and fire through which Delhi passed, produced a newness of life. Phoenix-like a younger and more virile generation arose out of its own ashes. Whereas it shows on the one hand the essential suppleness of Islam and its inner vitality, it also goes to establish the fact that it is wrong to suppose that the Muslims of the pre-Mutiny age intellectually and spiritually dead and were incapable of any progress. Had it been the case the Islamic Renaissance would not have been so quick, so wide-spread and so sure.

The new era began with the intensification of the modernising processes. The first few years were devoted to the establishment of peace and order, the pacification of the country, and the introduction of railways, telegraph, postal system and road I. See Appendix II.

construction. Modern India had thus begun to come into existence. Social, political, economic and industrial organisations; books and libraries, museums and theatres; sports and clubs; advertisements and newspapers; the police, prisons, orphanages, the army and the court; all began to act upon the individual and so many educative forces. One of the most powerful teachers was the railway which broke down the class barriers of ages and stimulated exchange of thought. The spiritual unrest that ensued found its expression in the economic sphere, as elsewhere. The industrialisation of the country destroyed the old balance of forces and gradually individualism took the place of the former collectivist outlook of the Indian. The social implication of the change was the dissolution of the privileged classes and the emergence of the middle class with its petty bourgeois psychology and Puritanic attitude towards art. It got itself reflected in the literature which became more and more religious, didactic and useful.

The activities of the Missions played not an inconsiderable part in the development of this psychology. As I have already pointed out they had mainly devoted themselves to the Hindus before the Mutiny but after its failure their position was greatly strengthened and they turned their attention to the Muslims.<sup>1</sup> No less than thirty centres were established in the

I. The missionaries had also the strong support of the official and the Orientalists, many of whom, as Sir William Muir, Sir Herbert Edwards, Captain W.R. Aikman, Perkins and Macdonald wrote against Islam. But most of the converts to Christianity (they were one million and ninety three thousands in 1864) were Hindus. Islam made a stubborn resistance and many who had turned apostates reverted to their faith. On the other hand most of the Europeans who had settled in India embraced Islam and Indian living. One of them, a Swiss by nationality, devoted his life to the propagation of Islam.

Panjab and a mass of literature was issued from Lahore, Amritsar and Ludhiana in the Panjab and Mirzapur, Bareilly, Lucknow, Allahabad and Agra in U.P.<sup>1</sup> Most of these books were polemical but others were translations of such English works as "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Holy War" by John Bunyan,<sup>3</sup> "Nature of Theology" by Paley,<sup>4</sup> "The Way of Life" by Dr. C. Hodge,<sup>5</sup> "Reflections on Nature" by Sturm,<sup>6</sup> "Analogy of Religion" by Butler,<sup>7</sup> "Line Upon Line" by Mrs. F. L. Mortimer,<sup>8</sup> and "Memorials of Christian Life" by Dr. Neave.

The effect on the Muslim religious circles was immediate. It was for the first time in its history in India that Islam was openly attacked. The danger was great and it was felt necessary

1. The Missions also issued a number of papers of which "Haqāiq irfān" (Amritsar) edited by Imād-ud-Dīn, "Mawāfiq-i-Ūqba" (Delhi) edited by two Hindu converts to Christianity, "Makhzan-i-Masīhī" (Allahabad) edited by Rev. J. J. Walsh and "Kaukab-i-Īsw" of Meerut are more known.

The other important papers of this period are "Oudh Akhbār" of Nawal Kishor of Lucknow (1858-daily from 1874), "Tuḥfī-e-Hind" of Meerut, "Nūr-ul-Akḥbār" etc of Cawnpore and "Oudh Punch" (1877) of Lucknow.

2. See appendix III.

3. "Masīhī Musāfir kā Barḥna": translated in abridged form by W. Bowley, Ludhiana (1840); "Īsāī Musāfir": a full translation by the same author, Allahabad (1845); "Masīhī Musāfir kā Bayān": by John Hari, Ludhiana (1869); "Qissa Yūsufī Musāfir" in verse by Sharaf-ud-Dīn, Allahabad (1873). "Mutlāshī-e-Dīn" by Rev. Golak Nath, Ludhiana (1869) and "Sair-i-Ṭālib-i-Najāt" (a translation of Mrs. Sherwood's 'The Indian Pilgrim' by John Hari), Allahabad, 1847, are two other books inspired by Pilgrim's Progress.

"Jang-i-Muqaddas" is the translation of "Holy War" by Yunus Singh. (Allahabad, 1866).

5. "Rāh-i-Zindgi" translated by Rev. Joseph Warren, 1850.

4. "Marifat-i-Ṭabīī" translated by Kamāl-ud-Dīn Haidar (Delhi-1844).

6. Translated by Pandit Bholā Nath (Agra-1844).

7. "Ṭahqīq-ul-Ajzā-ul-Zarūrī" (Agra-1873) translated by H. R. Williams published in 1892 under the title "Ṭahqīq-ud-Dīn wal Qaum."

8. "Ṭalīm dar Ṭalīm", Allahabad, 1874.

9. "Tazkirat-ul-Mominīn", Ludhiana, 1877.

to write books in refutation of those written against Islam and others enlightening the masses about their religion. Hali's earliest books in prose are of this nature. Muhammad Ābul Man Hāfīz Walī Ullah and Muhammad Naṣrat Ullah are some of the well known writers of this branch of literature in the Muslims of this period. The result was an intensification of religious life. Talent addressed its energy more and more in the direction of religion. Books began to be judged not by their art value but by their usefulness. The interest of the artist was thus obscured for the esthetic.

## XIII.

The education policy of the Government in the meanwhile had been determined by the Despatch of Sir Charles Wood. Universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1858 and Departments of Public Instruction were created in each province. Great impetus was given to vernacular literature. A Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of Sir Donald McLeod in Lahore in 1864 which decided that all sorts of good books on different subjects should be prepared in Urdu. The Government of Sir William Muir in U.P. offered five prizes annually of ₹.100 each to the authors or translators of the five best books of the year. Similar encouragement was given in Bihar where a considerable body of literature was produced under the guidance of Dr. Fallon.

The interest created by the Government by these measures resulted in great literary activity and a number of societies

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1. See appendix IV for this literature.
  2. They were placed under the control of the local governments in 1871.

were formed for the promotion of literature and the diffusion of knowledge. Most important of these was the Scientific Society Ghazipur, founded by Sir Sayyid in 1864. It had its own organ bearing the same name<sup>1</sup>; and was responsible for the translation of a number of a number of useful books from English. The other societies were, "Anjuman-i-Muzākira-e-Īlmiyya" (Behar Literary Society); "Anjuman-i-Panjab", Lahore; British Indian Association, Muradabad; East Indian Association, Murad Abad; "Majlis-i-Muzākira-e-Īlmiyya", Calcutta; Debating Club, Delhi; Delhi Institute; "Majma-e-Īlm (Society for Arts and Science) Madras; Allahabad Institute; "Anjuman-i-Tahzīb" (The Reform Society) Lucknow; "Anjuman-i-Adabī (Literary Society) Benares; Mirāj-Par Bombay; Muhammadan Club, Bombay; and Geographical Society, Bombay.

Most of these had their own organs and all of them encouraged the growth of vernacular literature.<sup>4</sup>

A greater attention was paid to the social and religious reform and a number of societies were formed for the eradication of social evils, like infanticide, child marriage, widow remarriage, the curtailment of expenses on marriage or death ceremonies, improvement of hygienic conditions and so on. This was another factor in the intrusion of utilitarian considerations into literature which was fully availed for the purpose of social reform: (see appendix VII).

1. Started on 30th March 1866. It was later called "The Aligarh Institute Gazette."

2. The name shows an attempt to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity.

3. See appendix V for other societies.

4. ~~See appendix VI for a list of some of the books of this period.~~ So great was the enthusiasm for the enrichment of Urdu literature that wealthy citizens spent a lot of money on it. The Maharaja of Benares alone offered Rs-10000/- for the translation of the Encyclopaedia Britannica if Govt. would contribute a similar amount.

In religion, Sādharnā Sabha, the Prārthnā Samāj, Gupta Sabhā, the Āryā Samāj, the Paramahansa Samāj, the Sanātana Dharma and the Ahmadiyya Movement, are the fruits of this intellectual ferment.<sup>1</sup>

## XIV.

It was at this time that Sir Sayyid started his movement for the uplift of his community. The greatest figure in the Islamic Renaissance and the one who influenced Hali most, it will not be out of place to give a brief account of his activities which in fact embody the history of Islamic Renaissance in India.

Born in 1817 in Delhi, Sayyid Ahmad Khan belonged to an aristocratic Sayyid family, many of whose members had held responsible positions at the Moghal Court. His father, Muhammad Taqī, had early come under the influence of the "Sufis" and had wholly discarded the world. The education of Sayyid Ahmad Khān was, therefore, wholly conducted under the supervision of his mother and her father, Khwājā Farīd-ud-Dīn, an able scholar, mathematician and diplomat. Through him Sayyid Ahmad Khān came in contact with English life and began to develop a keen appreciation for English character.

Soon after the death of his father in 1836 Sayyid Ahmad Khān entered the service of the East India Company. Though offered a more respectable situation, he insisted on starting from the bottom as a "Sar-rishtadār (a clerk in the judicial department)". An honest and diligent worker, he soon made his presence felt and gradually rose to the position of a Subordinate Judge.

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I. Also Dev Samāj and the Rādha Swāmīs.

Sayyid Ahmad Khān managed to find some time for literary work in the midst of his multifarious duties and edited "Aīn-i-Akbar with illuminating notes. A still more important work was "Asār-o-Ṣanādīd" (an archeological work on the buildings of Delhi which won him the Fellowship of the Royal Society.

During this period he also acquired the knowledge of English though imperfect, and began to take a keen interest in educational matters. He found that the opposition which was being offered to the new culture was futile and that it was bound to be disastrous in its results. He therefore devoted himself to the task of meeting this resistance and started two modern schools, one at Muradabad and the other at Ghazipur. Soon after this occurred the Mutiny in which he gave a practical proof of his loyalty to the British cause by securing the safety of the English in his district at great personal risk. He was offered by Mr. Shakespeare, the Collector of the district, the vast estate of <sup>Chāndpur</sup> Jahanabad (confiscated from a Sayyid family) in recognition of his services, but this greatly affected his sensitive mind. He was witnessing the sad plight of his ill-fated co-religionists and felt that he would be betraying his principles and glorying in the misery of his brothers in the faith if he should yield to the temptation. He, therefore, politely declined the estate, saying that he had made up his mind to emigrate to Egypt, which in fact he had.

In the meanwhile he was transferred to Muradabad where he found his community in a still worse situation. He felt that he

would be a traitor and a coward if he sought personal comfort in a distant land and leave his nation in that sad predicament. From now on he dedicated his life to the cause of his nation and started with two well-reasoned pamphlets: "The Causes of Indian Revolt," and "Loyal Mohammadans of India". The object was to remove the misgivings of the English against the Muslims. These were followed by the foundation of the "Scientific Society" and the British Indian Association, with a view to develop mutual understanding between the ruler and the ruled by bringing them together. It was with the same object that he wrote his famous and learned commentary of the Bible.

But these were only minor activities which by their very nature had to be slow in their effect. Realising that the antagonism to the new culture had no chance of success and that any further conflict would jeopardise the very existence of the Muslims, he persuaded them to take a sane view of the present and to endeavour to bring themselves in line with the modern thought. But being a practical reformer he was not prepared to break away wholly and immediately with the past, and, therefore, proceeded to work out a new cultural equilibrium by grafting the new upon the old. But principally he wanted to quicken "the sense of horizon"-the awakening to the existence of profound changes which were destined to give a new character to life in all its phases.

The greatest objection of the Muslims against the English schools was their neglect of religious instruction. Sayyid Ahmad Khân was himself opposed to the system and therefore he planned

a Muslim University which while imparting a Western secular education, should not ignore the religious needs of the students. He was still thinking of these plans when he got the opportunity, in 1869, to visit England and thus study English life and institutions in more detail. He was greatly impressed with all that he saw and his letters are an index of the admiration he developed for the English nation and the ideals it stood for. It became an article of his faith that the rejuvenation of his own nation was only possible by the acquisition of the virtues which have made the English great and progressive. These, he thought, could be attained through education and he made up his mind to materialise his plans of a residential Muslim University after Cambridge.

Coming back home he started (1870) a literary and critical magazine, "Tahzīb-ul-Akhlāq" (Moral Reformer) for religious, social and literary reform.<sup>2</sup> The magnetic influence of his personality attracted the best brains of the nation to his side. Of these the more notable are Maulvī Mehdī Ālī (Muhsin-ul-Mulk), Maulvī Mushtāq Ahmad (Waqār-ul-Mulk), Maulvī Chirāgh Ālī (Nawāb Āzam Yār Jang), Hāfiz Nazīr Ahmad (Shams-ul-Ūlamā), Shibli Nūmānī (Shams-ul-Ūlama) and Hali. The object was the creation of a liberal atmosphere and the revaluation of values. The nature

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1. Religious instruction was imparted in the Mission Schools but it was their professed object to proselytise the Indians. The Musalmans were, therefore, loath to send their children to these institutions. In Hyderabad (Sindh) a Muslim student was baptised in 1865 and 200 students left the school the next day. Garcin de Tassy.

2. Cf. Laing Ch'i-Ch'aō (d. 1929) the Chinese Reformer whose magazine "New (Renovated) People" ushered a new era in China. He also resembles Sir Sayyid in his admiration of the West.

and the scope of the movement (called the <sup>Alīgarh</sup> Movement) can ascertained from the following contributions of Hali to this magazine, as also to the <sup>Alīgarh</sup> Institute Gazette which stood for the same ideal. Writing on "What Lesson Ought We to take from the Certainty of Death?" he says:

"Should we die before our death and become dust before becoming dust, because the world and all in it, including ourselves, is transitory, or should we utilise the opportunity vouchsafed to us by making a struggle (to improve the things) and thus benefit ourselves and others by this greatest of God's gift to man—Life? The mystics and the mystical poets have laid a great stress on the former. They say that the world and all the activities of the world are 'nothing'...that it is absurd to struggle for worldly progress...and that it is the duty of man to be always ready for death and to regard all this 'non-existing-Being' a dream, a show, a mirage...The poets got a very interesting subject in hand and mostly devoted their verses to the inculcation of these teachings. But they are impracticable: if all were to act upon these, the world shall soon be a waste-land: Courage, bravery, wisdom, perseverance, diligence, justice, statesmanship, in short all those attributes which have been bestowed upon man would become inoperative and useless: Man would have no right to be the Caliph of God on the Earth.

The certainty of death does not mean that we should always be absorbed in the thoughts of the transitoriness of the world, give up all interest in life, sever our connection with everything and divest ourselves of that invaluable gift of God—Humanity. We have been given death so that we should regard our life an opportunity afforded to us to do our best...The Quran says: 'We have created death and life to see who does good deeds.'"<sup>1</sup>

In "Tadbīr"—another article—he discusses at length the causes of the belief in "Taqdīr" (predestination) and "Tawakkul" (to rely on the will of God) and shows how they have not the remotest relation with Islam in their popular and accepted sense:

"It is the duty of man to struggle and devise plans to attain his object. Islam has shown it to be necessary. 'Tawakkul' is only necessary because it sustains the faith in us...We must stir ourselves and use our hands and feet..."

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I. "Mazāmin-i-Hali": edited by Wahīd-ud-Dīn Salīm, Hali Press, Panipat, 1902, pp. 154-158.

Our deeds are determined by ourselves. If we were as helpless as the stones, the whole religious law and the doctrine of reward and retribution become false. Good, evil, praise, censure, ability, worthlessness, justice, injustice, wisdom, folly, duty, responsibility, guilt, innocence, etc, all these words as used in religion, ethics, law, become meaningless... "Taqdīr" simply connotes the various attributes of the different causes as created by the 'Creator of Causes'. Quran says 'God never changes the condition of a nation till it changes itself.' "Tawakkul" simply means to regard oneself humble and to trust in God."<sup>1</sup>

In "Religion is Ease" he establishes the fact that religion is meant for man and not man for religion and denounces the false accretions which have usurped the name of Islam and have gone to turn religion into a nuisance.<sup>2</sup>

The effect of these writings was immediate. There was a warm response to Sayyid Ahmad Khān when he invited the public to help him in the realisation of the great object of his life. He got able supporters in men like Maulvī Samī Ullah, C.M.G, Raja Sayyid Bāqar Ālī of Pindrāwal, Muhammad Inyāt Ullah Khān of Bhikampur, Nawāb Muhammad Luṭf Ālī Khān and Nawāb Aḥsan Ullah Khān (of Dacca). Among the princes he was able to secure the patronage of Muhammad Kalb-i-Ālī Khān, Nawāb of Rampur and Sir Sālār Jang of Hyderabad. Equally great was the enthusiasm of the masses. The Punjab, more liberal than the other provinces, was the first to offer its whole-hearted support and an invitation was extended to the leader to address the public of Lahore.<sup>3</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khān availed it on 25th December, 1873. Mammoth meetings were held and an extensive tour was arranged throughout the province which testifies the popularity of the movement and the transformation it brought about. In Gurdaspur

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1. "Mazāmin-i-Hali". pp. 24-45. Op. Cit.

2. Ibid. pp. 57-78.

3. The invitation was extended by the Scientific Society, Lahore, on the proposal of K.B.Md. Barkat Ali Khān, on 18th July, 1873.

the Muslim and the Hindu ladies held a meeting in which the national hero was presented an address—an incident unique in the history of India. Other provinces followed suit and an equally successful tour was made in Behar in May, 1874, on the invitation of the Scientific Society, Patna.<sup>1</sup>

Another factor which contributed towards the success of the movement was the change of the policy on the part of the Government. The Western education had failed in the object contemplated by the Whig politicians. Instead of Europeanising the Indians it acted as boomerang against the English. Cavour, Mazzini, Kossuth, Parnell and Mill became the teachers and the ideals of the newly educated generation which quickly became national-minded. The Government forbade the teaching of the history of the 19th Century Europe, but with no effect. The press, the theatre, and the secret revolutionary societies became active. Their professed object was the liberation of I. It is incorrect to say that Sir Sayyid was vehemently opposed in his educational campaign. No doubt, there was a section of the public (and this element is present in every society) which, headed by *Maulvi Inadad ali* did start a pernicious propaganda against him in the columns of *Nur-ul-Ahmed* and some other papers of Cawnpore, and even secured a "Fatwa" of heresy against him, but this opposition was due to a difference of opinion on religious matters. Sir Sayyid was a modern Mutazilite and tried to rationalise Islam. The missionaries in India, very strangely, subjected Islam to the very criticism to which Christianity had been subjected by the rationalists in the West. To meet them Sir Sayyid adopted the same attitude as the Christian writers had: he explained away the Quran by giving a rationalistic interpretation. The "fatwa" against him affected his popularity no more than a similar one against Iqbal. These people voiced nothing more than a dead cause. They were without the support of their environment and much like Don Quixote stabbed at steel windmills, hoping to destroy them by the gesture. That Sir Sayyid was the mouthpiece of his age is clear from the great number of Islamic societies that sprang up in the country on his call (~~See appendix VIII~~). Sir Sayyid died in 1898 and like Christopher Wren was buried in the corner of the great edifice he had helped to raise.

India from the foreign yoke. The Government realised that it was necessary for its own interests to encourage the Muslims (most of whom were still Wahābī-minded) and offer them every facility to ameliorate their condition. This is clear from the writings of important executive officers of the period.

Discussing the problem, James O'Kinealy, officer-in-charge of Wahābī prosecution says:

"I attribute the great hold which Wahabi doctrines have on the masses of the Muhammeden peasantry to our neglect of their education."<sup>1</sup>

E.C. Bayley, C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, wrote in making out a case for the change in policy:

"Is it any subject of wonder that they have held aloof from a system which, however good in itself, made no concession to their prejudices, made in fact no provision for what they esteemed their necessities, and which was in its nature unavoidably antagonistic to their interest, and at variance with all their social traditions?

The educated Muslim, confident in his old training, sees himself practically excluded from the share of power and of the emoluments of Government which he hitherto had almost monopolised, and sees these and all the other advantages of life passed into the hands of the hated Hindus...

Any answer based on their own degeneracy is a petitio principii, for their degeneracy is but one of the results of our political ignorance and neglect. To this day they exhibit at intervals their old intense feeling of nationality and capability of warlike enterprise; but in all other respects they are a race ruined under British rule."

With the change of policy active steps were taken in different provinces to support the Muslims in their educational development and to open out to them careers in Government service. In the Punjab, Mr. Pearson, the officiating Secretary to the Government, issued a circular letter to the members of the University Senate and other important public men, like Dr. Rahim Khan and Muhammad Latīf, for opinion on the proposals of the

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 I. Quoted by Dr. Hunter in "The Indian Musalmans", pp. 148-49. Op. Cit

the Government and further suggestions to popularise education among the Muslims.<sup>1</sup> It was found that the backwardness of the Muslims in education was due to their economic poverty<sup>2</sup> and the absence of religious instruction in Government schools. To meet these the system of grant-in-aid was started to give an impetus to denominational institutions and a number of scholarships were reserved for Muslim students. In Bengal the Government of Sir George Campbell ordered on 29th January, 1873, that the Muhsin Trust<sup>3</sup> be, in future, exclusively used for the promotion of the Muslim education. In U.P. Lord Lytton himself performed the foundation ceremony of the Aligarh College, on 8th January, 1877,<sup>4</sup> and his patronage secured financial help from the princes, both Hindu and Muslim. The Government itself aided by the grant of free land and grant-in-aid. The institution, the first of its kind in the East and still occupying the enviable position of being the premier educational centre of India, was popular from the beginning and attracted students from all parts of the Muslim world.<sup>5</sup>

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1. See Proceedings of the Government of the Punjab, Home Department, 1872. Letter No. 94, dated, Lahore, 17th April, 1872 and Letter No. 95 of the same date.

2. See appendix **IX** for the proportion of the Muslims and the Hindus in the schools and colleges in 1872. The Musalmans were more in the lower schools but could not study further because of poverty. The higher schools and colleges were in towns and Muslims, mostly living in rural areas, could not send their children to them. It will be interesting to note that the proportion of the Muslim and Hindu girls in the schools was 5:1. This further shows that Muslims were not averse to education.

4. The School was first opened on 8th Nov, 1872, by M. Sami Ullah, as a result of the decision of the Central Body, Benares.

3. Vide supra.

5. To counteract the danger of nationalistic tendencies it was insisted that the senior staff must be European. This is clear from the following from Theodore Morrison, the first Principal of the College: "The modification of their ~~views~~ political views (Continued as foot-note next page)

In 1885 was founded "Anjuman-i-Himāyat-i-Islam", Lahore, which did the same for the Muslims of the Panjab as Ālīgarh did for the Muslims of India. It was followed the next year by the Muhammadan Conference, which meets annually at some important centre to discuss the educational problems of the community.

## XV.

To sum up: the effect of the movement, coupled with the earlier influences, was the transformation of life in almost all its aspects. The individual, no longer bound down to conventions, found full opportunity of self-expression. Authority was challenged. Science encouraged mental flexibility, intellectual curiosity and rational outlook. The critical faculty was developed and everything was put in the crucible of investigation. Efficiency, progress and the application of scientific methods gave a stimulus to ambition and to the widening of the individual's wants. Religion, which insisted on the sacrifice of natural affections for the attainment of personal salvation, was made to coalesce with the sense of social duty. "Man was discovered new, and man, as he emerged, was a social creature."

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 continued from last page: would only be one aspect of the influence which the English staff would exercise upon all the opinions of their pupils...The Principal ought, however, to recognize that it is a part of his duty to make sure that the prevailing tone in his college, regarding politics, is loyal to the Queen's administration.

There is one political opinion which I believe that the Principal ought to impart in his official capacity, and regarding which he has as much right to overrule private judgment as upon a question of morals. The Principal should teach his pupils that loyalty to the Empress of India is a civic duty."

"Imperial Rule in India", Theodore Morrison; Archibald Constable and Co., 1899; pp. 120-121.

In literature the authors became intelligently conscious of their cultural servitude and made efforts to shake themselves free from the domination of Persian traditions and the tyranny of conventions. Sir Sayyid, Āzād, Hali and Nazīr Ahmad were the pioneers of the movement. At this stage it was more of the nature of an oratorical independence without an accompanying intellectual emancipation, and resembles very much the American movement of liberation from English traditions started by Peter s. Du Ponceau, William Cullen Bryant and Nathaniel Willis. But of revolt there was none. Hali and Āzād have not the stuff of which rebels are made. Anyhow the attitude of inferiority did lose its grip so that the later poets were able to discover themselves.

In content a war was waged against the erotic and poetry became more and more the criticism of life. They became disgusted with their productions to an extent that Shibli burnt his ghazals and Hali excised most of them from his "Dīwān". One can rightly object to this intrusion of ultra-artistic motif in literature but it must be conceded that these writers were so situated that they could not help it. In the agony of saving a people from ruin they could not pay much heed to form or the creation of beauty. Aesthetic emotions cannot have a free scope when such vital problems are forcing themselves upon the attention of the artist. Why it is so is best explained by Miss Harrison in her "Ancient Art and Ritual":

"If we watch a friend drowning we do not note the exquisite curve made by his body as he falls into the water, nor the play of the sunlight on the ripples as he disappears below the surface; we should be unhuman fiends if we did. And

again, why? It would do our friend no harm that we should enjoy the curves and the sunlight, provided we also throw him a rope. But the simple fact is that we cannot look at the curves and the sunlight because our whole being is centred on acting, on saving him; we cannot even, at the moment, fully feel our own terror and impending loss."<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to point out that the assimilation has not even yet been complete. Perhaps it will never be. The vast hinterland of India is still unaffected. The forces of conservatism are still strong though fighting a losing battle. The old has already been dethroned.

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I. Quoted by Andre Maurois in his "Aspects of Biography", translated by S.C. Roberts; Cambridge University Press, 1929, p. 37.

## Chapter

## III.

## The Man.

## I.

On the Grand Trunk Road running between Peshawar and Calcutta, some sixty miles north of Delhi, there is a small town called Panipat. With its narrow, dingy and winding streets, it still reminds one of mediaeval India. The local authorities do not seem to like the idea of outraging the historic sanctity of the place by modernising it. A Dak Bungalow, a High School, the Tehsil buildings and a petrol pump—these alone have managed to intrude. But they are all outside the town proper.

No less than four times the wide plains surrounding it have determined the course of Indian history. But the visitor to it, who comes with a heart full of emotion, returns disappointed; his curiosity meets nothing but monotonous fields and a small heap of earth marking the last resting place of the last of Lodhis.

In one of the typical streets of this town—Muhalla Ansariān—was born in 1837 an ordinary baby under very ordinary circumstances. This baby was destined to change the course not of the political but of the literary history of India. Panipat had scored another and a nobler victory.

This baby was Altaf Husain—the Hali of this thesis.

## II.

The family of Hali is as historic as his birthplace. It traces back its geneology to Ayyub Ansari, a well known figure

in the history of Islam. Some of his descendants had settled in Herat and had acquired a great prominence there because of their love of learning. Of these Khawājā Mālik Ālī, the progenitor of the Ansaris of Panipat, migrated to India, probably to escape the outrages of the Mongol invasion under Chengiz Khan. He made his way to Delhi to the court of Ghiās-ud-Dīn Balban (1265-1287), was received with befitting honour and appointed the Qazi of Panipat, the trustee of its shrines, the Imam of Idain and the executive officer to fix the rates of the market. Panipat and some of the surrounding villages were conferred on him for his personal expenses. His position, and more than that his character, soon won him widespread popularity and respect. When he died his family was well established.

Time rolled on. Battles were fought, won and lost at Panipat. Dynasties came and dynasties went. But the family of Anṣārīs flourished on. To worldly fame it never aspired; its forte was learning. For seven centuries it maintained an unbroken tradition of scholarship and erudition, handing on the torch of learning from one generation to another. When modern India dawned, it could boast of a Hali, a Ghulām-us-Saqalain and a Ghulam-ul-Ḥasanain.

Hali's father, Khawāja Ezad Bakhsh, had a literary bent of mind like the other members of the family. Though not in affluent circumstances, he was able to win the hand of a lady of a respectable local Sayyid family—the mother of his three children, Khawāja Imdād Ḥusain, a daughter and Hali. Intensely religious by nature, Ezad Bakhsh was always deeply engrossed in other-worldly

preoccupations. He developed some brain disease when Hali was only nine and died\_a victim of morbid broodings.

His young widow followed him soon after.

It was a terrible blow for the young Imdād. He could foresee the struggle he had to make for existence, with a small brother to educate according to the best traditions of the family. He performed his duty with a noble conscientiousness and proved a second father to Hali whose feelings of love and respect for him found a poignant expression in the elegy he wrote on his death which occurred in 1866.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

Panipat was then an important centre of culture and the seat of a number of scholarly families. Notable among its celebrities were Maulanās Ghaus̄ Ālī Shāh and Qalandar Ālī Shah whose spiritual influence radiated far and wide and attracted thousands of pilgrims and pupils from all parts of India. Hali thus developed into manhood in an atmosphere surcharged with religious zeal.

The question of the education of Hali was simple. Like the other boys of the town he was sent to the local mosque to learn to read the Quran, which he committed to memory. After he had completed this by no means easy task, he was placed under the able tutorship of Sayyid Jāfar Ālī, the nephew of Mīr Mammūn and related by marriage to the family of Shāh Walī Ullah. A well known scholar of Persian, he was able to develop a passion for literature in his pupil. After he had made sufficient progress

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I. Diwān-i-Hali: Maṭbā-i-Ansāri, Delhi, 1893; pp. 171-172.

Hali was sent to Hājī Ibrāhīm Ḥusain Ansārī to study Arabic literature and thought, particularly logic, rhetoric and natural philosophy.

Unfortunately for him Hali was married in 1854 at the early age of seventeen. Under normal circumstances this would have been the end of his educational career. His relatives advised him to enter some sort of service, but Hali, burning with the desire of completing his studies, could not reconcile himself to the idea. He made up his mind to make a struggle for himself, and so one day quietly slipped away from Panipat. His parents-in-law were affluent and took care of his wife during his absence.

#### IV.

The objective of Hali was Delhi, the chief centre of Islamic culture in India. Much has been written on the moral disintegration, the intellectual stagnation and the spiritual paralysis of the Muslims of this period by some of the recent historians. It cannot be denied that the political power of the Great Moghals had been on the decline since the death of Aurangzeb<sup>1</sup> and that the Muslims had been intellectually and morally on the downward course, first slowly and later precipitately, but somewhere from the beginning of the Nineteenth century they had awakened to their perilous condition and had shown a keen anxiety for their future. The great "Targhib-i-Muhammadiyya" movement which eventually culminated in what is now mentioned as the Mutiny of 1857, dates back to this period.<sup>2</sup> Had it been successful it would have gone down in history as the

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I. Vide supra.

2. Vide supra.

War of Liberation like the American War of Independence. This movement, which I have already discussed, also stood for religious reformation. The writers who find nothing but darkness in this period of intense religious and political fervour draw a wrong inference from the decadence of the Moghal power. It is not necessary that the decay of a great dynasty must bring with it the complete collapse in every aspect of the life of a nation, particularly in literature. The political state of Italy in the time of Dante and during the Renaissance was in no way better than that of the later Moghals; but this was the very period in which art and literature flourished to an extent unknown in that country. It was the same with India,<sup>1</sup> particularly Delhi. The princes were no doubt mostly moral wrecks, and the masses were ignorant and wedded to conservatism, but in the best circles the standard of culture was fairly high and some eminent scholars had become actively alive to the necessity of religious regeneration and intellectual awakening. It was the Delhi of Ṣadr-ud-Dīn Āzurda, Faiz-ul-Ḥasan, Fazl-i-Ḥaq, Maulānā Mahmūd-ul-Ḥasan, Nawāb Ṣiddiq Ḥasan, Nawāb Ilāhī Bakḥsh Mārūf, Ābdulla Khān Ūlwī, Mamlūk Ālī, Shāh Ishāq Muḥaddis, Shāh Ābdul Ghānī Muḥaddis, Ṣahbāī and of Ghālib, Momin, Zauq and Shefta.

It was the Delhi in which flourished a number of seminaries of

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 I. Sada Rang, the court-musician of Muhammad Shāh invented "khayāl", thus giving soul to music which was rigidly confined to the sombre "dhrupad" from the times of Shāmā Vedā; the artistic taste of Wājid Āli demanded something lighter and more lyrical and Indian music got "thumrī". It is to this prince again that Urdu owes the beginnings of drama whatever it is. Above all the whole of Urdu poetry developed in this period. No doubt it is far from being great but intellectual activity was there.

of great fame as "Dār-ul-Baqā", "Madrasa-e-Husain Bakhsh" and "Madrasa-e-Ghāzī-ud-Dīn."

It was also the Delhi in which modern influences had begun to work. Writing about it Mr. Spear says:

"New forces were stirring the face of the water. Delhi society consisted not only of greybeards who saluted each other and of pensioned princes on elephants...European fashions were followed by European ideas, and the youngmen began to see visions. So the 'Grecian style' appeared in the Chandni Chauk. The shops were crowded with European goods and Badrad-din Khan, seal engraver to Akbar II, introduced shop signboards with Roman characters. Then in 1827, with the formation of the Delhi College with both English and Oriental departments, the new learning began to permeate into the city. In 1835 an observer remarked that 'in no other part of our imperial possessions do the natives show so earnest a desire to imitate European fashions.'"<sup>1</sup>

To this Delhi Hali turned his face. His own impression of the place is summed in the opening lines of the Preface of Yādgar-i-Ghālib<sup>2</sup> and <sup>in</sup> the Elegy on Mahmūd Khān.<sup>3</sup>

Hali stayed at Delhi for about a year and a half and studied with Maulvī Nawāzish Ālī, a well known pulpiter and pedagogue. His inquisitive nature and love of learning found an ample scope for their activity, and he widened his mental horizon by freely mixing in all the literary and intellectual circles.

It was at this period that Hali wrote his first book. The early influences on Hali, both at home and outside it, were entirely religious. The stay at Delhi gave a galvanic touch to his religious preoccupations. The book was therefore naturally enough on a religious subject and in Arabic. It was a small polemical discourse supporting the views of K.B. Siddiq Hasan

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1. T. G. D. Spear: "The Twilight of the Moghals", Muslim Review, Calcutta, Vol. IV, No. 3, 1930.

2. Published Maṭba Riāz-i-Hind, Aligarh, 1929.

3. Dīwān, pp. 190-201.; Op. Cit.

(later Nawab of Bhopal), a pupil of Āzurda and a prolific writer of the period. Hali took his book, with all the gusto of a budding author, to his tutor, a teacher in "Madrasa-e-Husain Bakhsh." The tutor read the book, was infuriated beyond control and tore it to pieces: it supported, and correctly, the views of a Wahābī and the tutor was a "Muqallid" (a traditionalist).

The incident shows the most notable trait of the character of Hali—his catholicity<sup>1</sup> and proneness to reform, chiefly brought about by the study of "Hujjat-ul-Baligha" which he frequently quotes in his works in support of his views. Hali lost his book no doubt but the incident opened his eyes to the bigotry around him which he later on denounced in the strongest terms in his poems and "Mazāmin."

#### IV.

The pre-Mutiny days of Delhi were characterised by intense popularity of poetry. It was a feature of the cultural training: to understand and appreciate poetry was deemed essential for the aspirants to the higher and the select society: to be a poet was a sure passport to it. Hali had an inborn inclination towards poetry; his environment encouraged it. There were two important poets in Delhi at this time—Ghālib and Momin. The choice of Hali fell on Ghālib who was the fittest person to develop his nascent taste. Ghālib always used to advise his friends not to waste their time in the 'frivolous' art of verse-making. To Hali he gave a different counsel. He detected the signs of greatness in him and told him that it would be

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1. Hali's parents and relatives were 'Shia' and he himself was a 'Sunni'!

cruel if he did not take to poetry.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of Gh̄alib on the mind and art of Hali has been immense. A great and original poet Gh̄alib hated everything common and never offended against his poetic conscience by writing down to the masses. He has no doubt his limitations as a poet. His earlier ghazals written under the influence of Bedil are failures; what are called his 'sublime ideas' are not poetry: poets qua poets do not really have ideas at all, they have intuitions, emotional convictions and perceptions. The charm of Gh̄alib lies in the novelty and freshness of his diction and in his later ghazals which are intensely subjective. The influence of Gh̄alib on Hali the poet mainly consists in his insistence on emotional sincerity.

But it was Gh̄alib the man that influenced Hali most. Temperamentally an intellectual aristocrat, Gh̄alib sought peace in plebeian humility. He is the one man in the whole course of Urdu literature who possesses personality. Ward gives a very correct picture of Gh̄alib, the man, when he says:

"His long life, crowned with a lingering illness, was nothing but a series of disappointments and mortifications which would have soured the minds of most men, but in his case became a stimulus, not only to greater exertion, but to more exuberant mirth and good nature. Out of every grief of his own he could extract a jest for the amusement of his friends ...or was more beloved even by men who were least blind to his failings...Although it would be ridiculous to speak of Ghalib as a reformer, the influence which he exercised over the minds of his fellow countrymen undoubtedly prepared them for the acceptance of new ideas. He loosened the bands of prejudice and religious formalism, and kindled a spirit of generous philanthropy."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Hali came in contact with Gh̄alib at this time but his influence began to work on him during his second stay in Delhi (1861-70).  
2. G.E. Ward: "The Quatrains of Hali"; Humphry & Milford, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 77 and 79. (Published 1905).

The influence of Ghālib on Hali was as profound as it was inevitable. It changed his outlook on life and his conception of human values. Before he came in contact with Ghālib Hali's sole preoccupation was theology. Writing about his mental state at this time he says:

"It was the time when I was intoxicated with religious self-complacency. Out of all the creation of God I regarded only the Musalmans, and out of the seventy three sects of the Musalmans the 'Ahl-i-Sunna', and out of the 'Ahl-i-Sunna' only the 'Hanafiyya', and out of them only those who were strict observers of prayers and fasts and other external formalities, to be deserving salvation. In other words I thought the circle of the Mercy of God to be even narrower than the Empire of Queen Victoria in which all the followers of different religions and creeds are living peacefully."<sup>1</sup>

Hali's narrow religiosity found fault with Ghālib for the free sort of life he was leading. This resulted in an interesting correspondence in Persian verse. The humane and artistic spirit of Ghālib won. Hali repented of what he had said and written and underwent a radical change, developing a sanity of views and a catholicity of feelings which went a long way to the making of the future poet, critic and reformer.

#### V.

Hali wanted to stay in Delhi for a longer period but his brother and sister insisted on his return. It was therefore with a heavy heart that he left Delhi. He continued his studies privately for some time at Panipat till he got a petty job in the office of the Collector at Hissar in 1856. He had not been there long when the Mutiny broke out and he had to go back to Panipat where several notable scholars had migrated to escape the horrors that followed the occupation of Delhi. Hali thought

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I. "Yādgar-i-Ghālib", p.47; Op.Cit.

it best to complete his education with them and for the next four years applied himself hard and learnt philosophy, logic, jurisprudence and Hādīs from such eminent scholars as Maulvī ‘Abdur Rahmān Muḥaddiṣ, Maulvī Muḥib Ullah and Maulvī Qalandar ‘Alī

With the other refugees from Delhi had come the great calligraphist, Sayyid Jalāl-ud-Dīn Haidar and his sons Zāhir-ud-Dīn, Zāhir, and Shujā-ud-Dīn, Anwar. Hali was very much impressed by the nobility of their character and they became staunch friends. Another figure of Delhi, Mīr Mehdī Majrūh, a prominent pupil of Ghālīb, had also sought refuge in Panipat in the very street of Hali. In the company of these poets Hali revived the memory of the poetical symposiums (mushā’iras) of Delhi and thus kept his interest in poetry alive.

The scholars who had temporarily settled down in Panipat, and with whom Hali had studied, left one after the other on the restoration of order in Delhi. But by this time Hali was sufficiently advanced and proceeded to study independently. His capacity for work was marvellous and his writings bear an eloquent testimony to his unusual ability and thoroughness.

## VI.

After about four years of stay at Panipat, Hali set out for Delhi in search of employment and met Nawab Muṣṭafa Khān<sup>1</sup> <sup>Shefta</sup> who took him into his service as the tutor of his children. Their relations soon developed into close friendship and Hali remained with him till his (Shefta's) death which occurred in 1869.

Hali had written but a few ghazals during his first stay in  
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I. The famous author of "Tazkira-e-Gulshan-i-Bekhār".

Delhi. His output at Panipat was equally meagre. It was when he came under the influence of Shefta that he seriously took to poetry and showed his verses to him for correction. Later on he sent them to Ghālib on the advice of Shefta himself. The association of Shefta who, like Ghālib, hated hyperbole and common expressions and thoughts, had a wholesome influence on Hali. His taste inclined towards simplicity from the very beginning; the influence of Shefta accentuated this tendency.

Throughout his long stay in Delhi Hali was also under the constant influence of Ghālib whom he visited frequently. His other associates were Nayyar, Sālik, Zahīr and Anwar. They used to be together every evening in the 'Diwānkhāna' of Muhammad Karam Ullah Shaidā the rendezvous of all the young poets and literateurs.

Ghālib died in 1869. His death inspired Hali with an elegy which at once brought him in the fore-front of living poets. It is a portraiture of the personality of Ghālib and an abiding testimony of the debt Hali owed to his great master.

#### VII.

A year or two later occurred what outwardly appears to be a very minor incident but which actually marked a turning point in the life of Hali. It was the time when almost all the prominent poets of Delhi were dead. Here was the opportunity for Hali to come into the fore-front. Love of fame, that last infirmity of noble mind, began to disturb his otherwise calm soul. A 'mushāirā' was to take place in Bāzār Sītā Rām and Hali wrote a 'Sih-ghazla' which he boastfully read over to his friends. They eulogised

him to an extent that he seriously began to consider himself the leading poet of the day and anxiously waited for the 'Mushā'ira' when his admirers would publicly proclaim him the high priest of poetry. His hopes were, however, doomed to receive a shock. The friends did not come and Hali's dreams of fame faded away. He felt this desertion bitterly and by way of a challenge wrote a lengthy poem in self-laudation. But his innate commonsense asserted itself when he had completed it. He was a changed man. He began to develop a hatred for the "Mushā'iras" and the sort of poetry they encouraged. When requested some years later to participate in them, he expressed his inability to do so in a 'Qita' which summarises his poetic principles.<sup>1</sup> The self-laudatory poem he changed into the 'Tashbīb' of a "Nātiyya Qā'sida" which is probably the first of its kind in Urdu literature. Its concluding verses are the confession of a disillusioned soul and mark the beginning of a new phase of Hali's life.

## VII.

The literary activities of Hali in prose begin from this period. His first writings were of a polemical nature on religious problems and were called forth to contradict some scurrilous allegations against Islam and its founder.

The missionary activities, as already shown, has increased with redoubled zeal after the Mutiny with the result that a number of Muslim families were proselytised. Of these one was

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1. Diwan: p. 19; Op. Cit.

2. Ibid, pp. 163-167.

that of Maulvī Sirāj-ud-Dīn of Panipat.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries found a very useful propagandist in his son, Īmād-ud-Dīn, who wrote a number of books against Islam, notably "Hidāyat-ul-Muslimīn" (1870), "Tahqīq-ul-Īmān" (1870), "Tārīkh-i-Muhammadi" (Lahore-1871), "Naghma-e-Tambūrī" (1872) and "Haqīqat-i-Īrfān" (1874).<sup>2</sup> A storm of indignation arose in Islamic religious circles and a number of books were written in refutation of these publications.<sup>3</sup> Hali, with his intense love of Islam and the Prophet, felt it his duty to meet this calumniator of his faith. He was all the more keen, for the man was his fellow townsman. He was thus the first to enter the controversy. His first book, "Tiryāq-i-Masmūm", written in 1868, was a reply to "Hidāyat-ul-Muslimīn". It is not available today and all I can say is that it is reported to be a well-reasoned thesis written with a controlled enthusiasm which raises it above the level of common polemics.

The other book is "Padri Īmād-ud-Dīn kī Tārīkh-i-Muhammadi"

~~1 His other books are "Buzurg Nathāniāl" (Amritsar-1874)~~

1. The only other members of his family who refused to join him in receiving the baptism were his brothers, Karīm-ud-Dīn and Khair-ud-Dīn and the wives of Khair-ud-Dīn and Īmād-ud-Dīn.
2. His other books are "Buzurg Nathāniāl" (Amritsar-1874); "Man Anā" (Amritsar-1874); "Masīh kī Apne Haq men Shahādat" (Ludhiana-1875); "Āḡār-i-Qiāmat" (Amritsar-1877); Commentary on Book of Revelations
3. Notable of these are: "Lahn-i-Dāūdī" (Delhi-1872) in reply to "Naghma-e-Tambūrī", "Tashīh-ul-Tawīl" (Delhi-1874) in reply to "Commentary on Book of Revelations" and "Āḡubat-ul-Zallīn" (Delhi-1876) in reply to "Hidāyat-ul-Muslimīn" all by Muhammad Ābul Mansūr; "Siyānat-ul-Īmān" (Lahore-1871) in reply to "Tahqīq-ul-Īmān" and "Dīni Mubāhisa" (Amritsar-1874) in reply to a debate both by Hāfiẓ Walī Ullah; "Makhārij-i-Āḡāid-i-Nūrī" (Bareilly-1880) by Muhd: Dastgīr Hāshimī and "Tarāna-e-Hijāzi" (Lahore-1878) by Muhammad Ālī both in reply to "Naghma-e-Tambūrī"; Nusrat-i-Ahmadiyya (Delhi-1873) by Ahmad Hasan, in reply to a debate of Īmād-ud-Dīn; "Zulfiqār" (Patna-1877) by Shujāt Ali in reply to a book by Īmād-ud-Dīn and Rev. C.G. Pfander; "Mahākima" (Delhi-1881) by Muhammad Ihsān Ullah in reply to "Hidāyat-ul-Muslimīn."

par Munsifāna Rāe"(1871). This too is not available. According to Muhammad Fārūq a copy lies in the private library of Ghulam-ul-Hasanain of Panipat.<sup>1</sup> His only other book of this period is "Maulūd Nāma" of which the manuscript was recovered from his papers after his death and published posthumously. The book differs from others of the kind in its avoidance of the gossip about portents and the supernatural.

## IX.

It was soon after this, probably in 1870, that Hali accepted a post in Lahore.<sup>2</sup> This was destined to be one of the most formative periods of his life. Hali found it easier to shake off the clogging shackles of traditionalism in the unconventional and liberal atmosphere of Lahore. It was here that he came in contact with English literature and was afforded the opportunity of studying the Western ideals of art. But before I discuss the nature of these influences it is necessary to give an account of the new atmosphere in which Hali found himself.

The Punjab was the last Indian province to be annexed by the English by conquest(1849). The Government had hardly settled down when the Mutiny occurred and large tracts of the country once more relapsed into anarchy. When reorganisation began, the attention of the Government was absorbed in the administrative and Public Works Departments and the prevention of famines which frequently ravaged the country. Education could not get

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1. "Hayāt-i-Hali": a small pamphlet, with very little matter.
  2. The date of Hali's going to Lahore is uncertain. Most writers fix it at 1874. I cannot accept this date: It is acknowledged that Hali left ~~from~~ Delhi soon after the death of Shefta(1869). Hali himself refers in the Preface of "Nazm-i-Hali" that he left Lahore in 1874 after a stay of four years. He therefore must have gone there in 1870.

its proper share till the early sixties when the University School was established in Lahore. Fortunately for her Pūnjab was able to secure the services of Dr.W.G.Leitner, a keen educationist and a lover of Oriental learning.<sup>1</sup> The Deapartments of Public Instruction had been established soon after the Mutiny under Wood's Despatch but in almost all the provinces they proved in no way better than the Education Committees they had superceded. Their heads were either soldiers or Civil Servants and they completely officialised them. Of course the Punjab was no exception to this system but the presence of Dr.Leitner soon made itself felt. He did not conceal his hatred of the 'filtration theory' of Macaulay and felt that the educational system which was being forced on the country was harmful in so far as it was not a free expression of the national life. He was not against the cultural penetration of the East by the West, but he insisted that the meeting of the two could not mean that East should come to West, leaving behind all the stores of her wisdom it had accumulated for ages, only to beg for the intellectual and material bounty of the West. The object of Macaulay, as already shown, was the Europeanisation of India. But the policy was doomed to failure. It had been planned under a false psychology. It postulated the omnipotence of education and ignored the fact that the difference between races is due to history, to age-long environment and not to upbringing.. It also did not take into account India's own culture about which

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I.A Hungarian Jew by nationality, Dr.Leitner had served as Interpreter in the Crimean War and had held the office of Assistant teacher of Arabic in King's College, London, before joining the Panjab Education Department.

Sir Thomas Munro had remarked that "if civilisation should become an article of export between India and Great Britain, the advantage would not altogether be on the side of the latter". The pious wishes of Macaulay would have succeeded if the Indian had been like the English in the first century B.C. But such was not the case.

The policy also failed in the attainment of the best results on account of the neglect of the vernaculars. As Prof. Dodwell correctly remarks when he says:

"the excessive use of English as the medium of instruction rendered the educational system less effective than it should have been. The mere fact that the language of the schools is not the language of the home, could not but have produced its necessary consequences. The boy lived in two different worlds one the world of books, dim, abstract, rarely touching his own experience; the other the world of life, warm and coloured and concrete, but rarely related to books. Nor had he been taught to build a bridge from one to the other by the habit of translating."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Leitner saw the evils of this policy. He met everywhere the progressive decay of the national languages and oriental learning. He believed that the vernacular literature could only be created by the establishment of an Oriental University. With this object in view he founded the "Anjuman-i-Punjab" on January 21st. 1865. It aimed at the "revival of ancient Oriental learning and the diffusion of useful knowledge among all classes of inhabitants of the country through the medium of the vernaculars."

The activities of the "Anjuman" being manifold, a number of committees were appointed with clearly defined duties. Of these

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I. Henry Herbert Dodwell: "A Sketch of the History of India", Longman and Co., London (1925). p. 193.

the Library Committee, the Educational Committee and the Medical Committee were more important. By the end of the year it had as many as 244 members including some of the highest administrative officers, notably, Sir Donald McLeod (the Lieut. Governor), Mr. Cooper (Commissioner, Lahore), C. N. Aitchison (Deputy Commissioner, Lahore), A. Brandreth, Lepel Griffin (Vice-president), Mr. Pearson (Inspector of Schools, Rawalpindi), Mr. Perkins, Dr. Scriven and Dr. Neil. They helped the society with money, books, advice and official encouragement. Some of them wrote books and delivered lectures for its benefit. Of the "correspondence members" the names of Prof. Garcin de Tassy of the Paris University, Dr. Gustavus Schneider of Frankfurt and William Coldstream of Delhi require a special mention.

During the first year of its existence the "Anjuman" established a Library and a Reading Room. They were the first of their kind in India and were accessible to all without any charge. The enthusiasm of the public was so great that the local publishers and the editors of the papers presented their publications and papers free. The more important work was done by the Educational Committee which instituted a Board of Examiners in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Urdu and Hindi, to conduct examinations in these languages and award certificates to the successful candidates. The English members took a keen interest in the activities of the "Anjuman". Mr. Cooper offered a prize of Rs. 50/- for the best essay on the "Best Means for Promoting Education in Punjab", and Mr. Perkins submitted in one of the earliest meetings his "Mīquā'at-ul-Āmla"-a treatise

intended to be a specimen of popular Urdu style. He was for the elimination of Arabic and Persian words from the future publications but the Committee did not agree on the ground that this element alone differentiated Urdu from Hindi. It was, however, laid down that efforts should be made to encourage a pure style, free from the traditional redundancies and exaggerations.

The more constructive work of the "Anjuman" consisted in the arrangement of public lectures. No less than thirty nine were delivered on different social, educational, literary, scientific and medical subjects during the first year, by eminent English and Indian gentlemen.<sup>1</sup> The most important of these was Āzād who read a number of learned and interesting papers on Urdu poets and cognate subjects. The series was interrupted by his diplomatic mission to Central Asia with Pandit Manphūl, but he concluded it on his return in 1867.

The "Anjuman" also established six vernacular schools in Lahore and appointed a paid lecturer to deliver lectures in Urdu in popular style, on scientific subjects.

The "Anjuman" became so popular that soon branches were opened in other cities. Coldstream, then posted at Delhi, was the first to move in the direction and established the "Delhi Society" in the later part of the year. It soon acquired a great prominence and

I. These included "The Simplification of Urdu Language" by Sayyid Hādī Husain (24th February, 1865); "The Necessity and the Means of Promoting the Knowledge of Hindi in the Panjab" by Nobeen Chandra Roy (24th February, 2nd June and 25th September, 1865); "The Introduction of Machinery and the Education of the Manufacturers" by Muhammad Nāim (2nd June, 1865); "The Evils of the Education System in the Panjab" by Pandit Manphūl (7th April and 22nd April, 1865).

played a valuable part in the Indian Renaissance. Hali read a few papers on its stage. Sialkot, Hissar, Amritsar and Gujranwala followed suit.

Such were the activities of "The Anjuman-i-Punjab" in brief. But its moving spirit was Dr. Leitner. He was fired with enthusiasm and all his efforts were directed towards the attainment of one object: the establishment of an Oriental University in Lahore. Knowing that he could not succeed single-handed, he started a campaign to win the public to his side. He appealed to them in the name of nationalism and warned them that their culture was in danger of extinction. Addressing the Rases of Lahore and Amritsar in one of his specially convened meetings, he said:

"Knowledge is power everywhere, but particularly in India. You are looked upon as the leaders of your several nations. It is therefore necessary that you should lead the van of education and progress... Sound education cannot be prescribed, but must be developed. For India the Oriental languages are the natural basis for the superstructure of European Sciences and their study alone can give to the nations of this country that mental discipline without which the acquisition of mere 'knowledge' is unsound and delusive."<sup>1</sup>

His dominating personality, wide influence, the sincerity of his convictions and the persuasiveness of his appeal won Dr. Leitner a great following. He organised various deputations and waited upon the Executive authorities to plead the cause which he had made his own. Meanwhile the "Journal of Anjuman-i-Punjab", "Nāfi-ul-Ūlūm (an Arabic journal of Lahore)<sup>2</sup>, Koh-i-Nūr, Gyānprūdānī Patrikā, Melār Akhbār and other papers, carried on

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1. See "Report of the Anjuman-i-Punjab" for 1865.

2. It will be interesting to note that a number of Arabic journals appeared from Lahore and Ludhiana in these days.

the campaign with unabated vigour till the Government of Sir Donald McLeod\_himself a keen Orientalist\_could no longer ignore the movement. The matter was thoroughly discussed by him with Arthur Brandreth and C.N.Aitchison(later Sir) and others. They did not completely agree with Dr.Leitner but a change of policy was felt necessary and the following letter was circulated to all the Education Officers,inviting suggestions:

"The Lieutenant Governor is of opinion that the time has arrived when the Educational Department of the Punjab should take some decided steps than it has heretofore done,towards the creation or extension of a vernacular literature.The Scientific Association of the N.W.P,founded by the Principal Saddar Ameen,Syud Ahmud, and other bodies and individuals elsewhere, no doubt have done, and are doing, something towards this end...But it is more especially incumbunt on the Government, in His Honour's opinion, to take a prominent lead in a matter so intimately connected with the future progress of the Indian Nation. With the extension of English Education the facilities for transferring into the languages of the country the knowledge, literature and Sciences of the West, have vastly incresed.

But it seems pretty certain that, unless some specific action be taken on our part, and some really effective stimulus applied, the process will be carried on at a rate much less rapid than is desirable, and in some sense necessary, if we would do justice to the position in which the Ruler of events has seen it fit to place us here...<sup>1</sup>

The tangible results of the movement were the establishment of University College,Lahore(1869, raised to University in 1882), the Board of Vernacular Instruction and the Punjab Book Depot. The dream of an Oriental University was never fulfilled. The function of the Book Depot was the preparation of original books and the translation of English works of literature or science in vernaculars, especially Urdu. Piyāre Lāl Āshob was appointed its curator. The chief difficulty was the dearth of proper men. Those who knew English were not proficient in Urdu and it was -----  
I.Punjab Government,Letter No.296,dated 10th June,1865.

feared that the language of the publications would not come to the standard. The only way to meet it was the appointment of well known oriental scholars to correct the translations and other books and if necessary to recast them in literary form. Hali was entrusted with this duty which he performed for four years.

## X.

This ~~job~~ helped Hali to develop a taste for English literature. He had already begun hating the insincere and conventional poetry of his own language; the knowledge of English, though indirect, set him thinking. It is not known what particular English or European authors or works he read, but it is clear from his writings that he had gone through all the publications of the Aligarh Scientific Society, which included books on history (of Europe, China, Egypt, Greece, Rome, England, the Reformation and French Revolution), sociology, political economy, politics, biography, geography and agriculture. Besides these he must have read all the publications of the Punjab Book Depot (at least those produced during his stay at Lahore). Buckle's History of Civilisation and Mill's Liberty are two of the important books he quotes from. In his "Muqaddima" he refers to, and in some cases quotes, Macaulay, Goldsmith, Scott, Byron, Milton, Shakespeare, Sophocles, Virgil, Ariosto and Pindar. I believe the names of most of these writers he came across when studying some critical work or history of literature. In physical sciences he seems to have read all the elementary books on physics, chemistry, magnetism, astronomy, biology and geology, published by the Book Depot. He is never

tired of displaying his knowledge of these in season and out of season, in his writings.

Goldsmith's Apostrophe to Poetry in his Deserted Village seems to have influenced Hali very much to arrive at his view of the function of poetry. He believed that Goldsmith was the first to revolt against the classical traditions in English poetry and lay the foundations of what he calls "natural" poetry. Goldsmith, therefore, became his hero and he could never shake off his influence. His new experience convinced him that the old poetry was false and he conceived an intense hatred for it. He refers to the change he underwent in the following words in the Preface of His Diwān:

"There was a time when poetry and love were regarded to be inseparably inter-related. This was not without its reasons: firstly, poetry is the spontaneous utterance of those intense and passionate feelings which awaken in the heart of man because of love; secondly, the combustible element in the nature of poetry requires some spark to make it blaze up; and thirdly, the poetry of the nation supported this view... In short for a long time I could not appreciate a verse which had not the love element in it. As a matter of fact I hesitated to regard it as poetry at all. In my own case, too, whenever this madness took hold of me, I used to shut my eyes and follow the thoroughfare which was being tread by a long line of wayfarers. The company of the caravan, the smoothness of the path, the surrounding scenery all were so tempting that it never occurred to me to think of some other route. But when the sun of life took a turning and the day began to set, all those illusory lights which seemed ~~very~~ attractive than the truthful realities owing to the sleep of forgetfulness, gradually began to disappear. The passion for ghazal and Tashbib changed into a sense of remorse and I began to feel ashamed of the poetry of which I once used to be so proud. Much though I counselled myself that now had arrived the days of writing ghazals, my conscience answered that these days had gone...

Those aware of the lure of the erotic in poetry know that if, like the blood, it is once tasted, it is hard to get rid of it. But the needs of the time taught me the lesson that it was better to hear condemnation for heart-rending but useful things than to receive compliments for those outwardly attractive but in reality frivolous."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately Hali's knowledge of English literature was limited limited to Goldsmith and similar writers who were unimaginative. Of an intellectual cast of mind like them he followed their style.

One of the first of his new poems is his "Apostrophe to Muse" in which he gives his new poetic ideals:

"My Muse! If thou be not heart-entrancing, it is no sorrow;  
 But pity on thee! If thou be not heart-melting, thou.  
 Though the whole world be spellbound in allegiance to artifice,  
 Courage! From thy own simplicity turn not back, thou.  
 If the precious gem of sincerity is in thy own nature,  
 Independent of applause from the present age art thou.  
 The deep sea of reality thou hast made heaving with waves;  
 Thou shalt sink the ship of imposture, and yet survive, thou.  
 Those days are gone, when lies were the creed of verse-making;  
 Now, should the Qibla shift that way, do not worship thither, thou.  
 If to live within the eyes of men of insight is precious,  
 With those bereft of vision hold no compromises, thou.  
 Should men turn up their noses at thy new-fangled medicine,  
 Hold them excused:-if so be thou art a wise physician, thou.  
 In stillness, with thy truth, build up a home in people's hearts;  
 Lift not on high the banner of refinement, yet, thou.  
 O Muse! Since thou hast cast thyself upon the straight path,  
 Begin not now to look upon its ups and downs, thou.  
 If a new world is to be conquered, do thou go forth, and take  
 Clear of the hugging rafts thy own ship, thou.  
 Value of truth does come:-but after disparagements;  
 If there be an instance to the contrary, think it rare, thou." 1

The other English writer who influenced him to any considerable degree was Macaulay. Here too he was unfortunate for Macaulay is the most unreliable of English critics and is responsible for giving currency to a number of false notions.

#### XI.

Hali was still in Lahore when Āzād started his historic Mushā'ira as the Assistant Secretary of the "Anjuman-i-Panjab" in 1874. This was the time when the controversy between Hindi

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I. Translation by G.E. Ward: "Quatrains of Hali", Op.Cit.

and Urdu was at its keenest. Hindi, as we know it today, first came into existence when Dr. Gilchrist induced Lallūjī in 1803 to write "Prem Sāgar" and other books in Nāgri script, removing the Persian and Arabic elements of Urdu. It cannot be said that the motive was political and that the movement was started to create a gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims, but the fact remains that by 1860 the attitude of the Hindu intelligentsia became aggressive and it made a bid to oust Urdu out of all the schools and the courts, although they had made no objection in 1835 when Urdu was made the court language in place of Persian. The movement reached its climax in 1869 when Bābū Sarod Parshād demanded in the meeting of the Allahabad Institute, held on 6th December, that the proceedings be recorded in Hindi and not Urdu. An aggressive campaign was started to materialise the object. This was a direct challenge to the Muslims who saw in it a blow to their culture and the certainty of future political complications of wider magnitude. Sir Sayyid, Sayyid Wāris Ālī of Muzaffarpur, Khān Bahādur Mīr Sayyid Muhammad, Fidā Huṣain and Mansūr Ahmad wrote well-reasoned and spirited articles in the Institute Gazette, Ālīgarh, Jalwa-e-Tūr, Meerut, and the Oudh Akhbār, Lucknow. The Hindus were led by Bābū Shiv Parshād. The Government of the North Western Provinces, however, yielded to the demands of the Hindus.

It was different in the Panjab. Here Urdu was an alien language, almost unknown before its conquest. The spoken language of the inhabitants was Panjabi while the court language was Persian. Urdu was introduced after the Mutiny. Great was the resentment of the people for they did not like the idea of

acquiring the language of the "Hindustānis" who had flooded the province with the English and monopolised all offices. They protested against the imposition of an alien language but to no purpose. Curiously enough, when Hindi-Urdu controversy started in the U.P.(the home of Urdu), the Panjab espoused the cause of Urdu. Great efforts were made for Hindi by men like Nobeen Chandra Roy (and he was a Bengali!) but, as it happened, the executive officers advocated Urdu. More important of these were Col. Holroyd, the Director of Public Instruction, Dr. Leitner, Mr. Brandreth, Major Fuller, Mr. Pearson and Mr. Perkins. Across the seas they found a great advocate in Garcin de Tassy who delivered very illuminating lectures in the University of Paris on the importance, capacity, possibilities and the great future of this language.

No doubt, therefore, that Āzād had the full support of Col. Holroyd, now the President of the "Anjuman", in his new venture to reform Urdu poetry. The first modern "mushā'irah" took place in May 1874, in which Āzād delivered his famous "Lecture"<sup>2</sup> on Urdu poetry and the necessity for its reform. He also entertained the audience with a model poem, "Shab-i-Qadr"<sup>2</sup>

I. The "mushā'iras" were organised by the Anjuman from its very inception in 1865, but most of the poets wrote ghazals on the Persian "misra tarah" and only two or three poets wrote in Urdu. Mirzā Khurram, Munshī Muhammad Ālī, Ālī, Shaikh Ghulām Mahbūb Subhānī, Rais Lahore, Shaikh Muhammad Fīroz-ud-Dīn Khān, Rais Lahore, Muftī Imām Bakhs̄h, Muftī, Batala, Mirzā Subhān Wardī Khān, Baiza, Faqīr Sayyid Zafar-ud-Dīn, Rais, Lahore, Pandit Lāl Kishān, Tālib and Sayyid Meq̄hī Fīrogh these all wrote in Persian. The only ones who took part in Urdu were Āzād, Muhd Ālī, Faiz, Rafiq (Ilāhī Bakhs̄h), Misr Rām Dās Qābil.

2. Both reprinted in "Nazm-i-Āzād".

It was decided that in future the poets should write poems on given subjects (instead of given hemistichs) and should have their own choice of form and metre. The next meeting took place in June, 1874. This "Mushā'ira" marks the beginning of the "Modern Urdu Poetry".<sup>1</sup> Hali was one of its enthusiastic supporters and his participation made it a success. But he had attended only four meetings when he was transferred to Delhi. The poems that he read in these meetings are, "Barkhā Rut", "Nishāt-i-Ummīd", "Hubb-i-Waṭan" and "Munāzira-e-Rahm-o-Inṣāf" — all written in 1874. Intellectual in their content they reflect the influence of Goldsmith and School of poetry.<sup>2</sup>

## XII.

To the prose works of this period belong "Ṭabāqāt-ul-Arz", the translation of a French work on geology from its Arabic version (1874)<sup>3</sup> and "Majālis-un-Nisā" (1874), a domestic novel, much after Goldsmith's Vicar of the Wakefield.<sup>4</sup>

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1. It would not be out of place to mention the names of the poets who took part in this historic "mushā'ira". They are: "Azād, Shāh Anwar Husain Humā, Mirzā Ashraf Beg, Muhammad Ālā-ud-Dīn Kashmīrī, Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh Rafīq, Muhammad Muqarrab Ālī (pupil of Azād), Maulvī Ammū Jān Walī (pupil of Ghālib) and Maulvī Atā Ullah. Mirzā Ābdul Ghānī Arshad and Saif-ul-Haq Adīb of Delhi took part in subsequent meetings.
  2. When at Lahore Hali also worked for some time as the Sub-Editor of the "Panjab Magazine" during the absence of Azād in Persia. It was an educational journal which had superseded the "Atālīq-i-Panjab" and was published by the Government under the editorship of Piyāre Lāl Ashob.
  3. It was taken up at the instance of Dr. Leitner.
  4. The style of the novel reminds one irresistably of Nazīr Ahmad whose "Banat-un-Nash" and "Mirāt-ul-Ūrūs" had appeared in 1868-69. Hali was awarded a prize of Rs. 400/- for it by the Government of Lord Northbrook.

The book marks Hali's first attempt at social reform.

The stay at Lahore had also a far-reaching effect on Hali's mind in another way. It changed his mental outlook and conception of values. From now on his life becomes a public force, a force ranged on the side of goodwill and true fellowship between the great races of India:

If you cherish the good of your country,  
Do not regard your countrymen as strangers.  
Be they Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists or "Brahmus",  
Consider them the pupils of your eyes.

"Hubb-i-Watan".

Hali now stands for liberalism and advancement. Transferred to Delhi at the close of 1874, the very first poems he writes there "Kalimat-ul-Haq" and "Munāzira-e-Tāssub wa Inṣāf" deal with the spiritual and mental change he has undergone. They form a sort of prelude to all his subsequent work. He dedicates his life to truth which is with him the voice of reform and righteousness:

"Truth! thou secret of God.  
When thou comest from behind the veil in thy naked glory,  
When thy friends are few  
And thy foes far outnumber them,  
When the whole world has deserted thee  
Thou shalt find an ally in Hali.  
Do not forget him.<sup>1</sup>

"Kalimat-ul-Haq"

"Tāssub wa Inṣāf" is the history of the struggle of his soul. It shows his disillusionment about his much-vaunted culture. He had been labouring under the mistaken notion that it was the only thing that did matter and that all else was barbarism. Now with the newly given light he sees his own hollowness and begins to appreciate the greatness and the goodness of others.

"When I saw the possessions of other nations,  
I found myself confronted with my own nakedness,  
I felt sincerely grateful to those  
Who had made me the target of their criticism" (Tāssub-wa- Inṣāf)

I. See also his Essay: "Zubān-i-Goya" in "Mazāmin", pp1-3, Op.Cit.

## XIII

Hali did not find Lahore very congenial. He led a lonely life and was disgusted with the society around him. The epidemics of small-pox and cholera in the town, followed by his illness with none to look after him, made him all the more nervous. Delhi was always in his mind; it was with an aching heart that he had left it:

"Now that I have left Delhi,  
My heart is satiated with life:  
There is no more a home for me in the world." "Diwān" p.60

He refers to his loneliness with a touching pathos in "Barkha Rut" and some of his ghazals, particularly the one written during his illness.<sup>1</sup> Finding that he could no longer live in Lahore, he accepted the post of teacher in Anglo-Arabic School, Delhi. He did join the Chief's College, Lahore, for eight months after this but the charms of a better position had no attractions for him and he again went back to Delhi.

## XIV.

On reaching Delhi Hali found all his old companions gone, and the place deserted. The sight was unbearable for his sensitive mind and when he remembered its past glory and the culture it represented, cries burst out from his heart involuntarily. Thinking of his companions he says:

"Nor Ghalib, nor Shefta, nor Nayyar remain;  
Nor Wahshat, nor Salik, nor does Anwar remain;  
Now must you accept, Hali, for that circle of friends,  
Those scars upon your heart, which for ever remain."<sup>2</sup>

1. "Diwān", p.129. See also pp.130-131, Op.Cit.

2. Translation by G.E.Ward, "Quatrains of Hali", Op.Cit.

Hali is so much saddened that whenever associations remind him of Delhi, he forgets his themes and breaks into tragic dirges on Islam and Delhi. The terrible fate of Delhi had influenced more or less, every poet of the day. (continued next page)

The other thing that impressed Hali most was the abject misery of the Muslims. He felt that if something extraordinary did not intervene their extinction was certain. The situation awakened his sensibility. He had, no doubt, been developing his personality, but he had no ideas to voice, no ideal to pursue. His mind was like a wooden horse with no motor power to drive it. But now the iron went deep into his soul. The naked and ghastly reality stood before him. His poetry from now on became a lament on the glory that was Islam. Referring to his lot as a mourner he says:

"They say Hali that the fields of Muse were once expansive.  
Some wrote romances of love and beauty,  
And some enriched the literature with mysticism.  
Some warmed the hearts of their friends with lyrics,  
And some got 'Robes and Rewards' for their 'Qasidas'.

No time did we get to sing in this assembly.  
The tune of the times gave us no respite.  
This rithem of wails and laments-it never did end.  
No opportunity for us to start some colourful song.  
We kept on beating our breasts till the last breath;  
Our lot was to mourn the glory of the nation."<sup>1</sup>

But with all this Hali was not a pessimist; he was a reformer. No doubt he was sad but his meloncholy never grew to despair. He lamented the fall of his people but only to rouse them to a sense of their former glory.<sup>2</sup> His spirit is not daunted by the dark clouds that threatened and he welcomes each rebuff, saying:

"You have opened our eyes ye reverses,  
We shall never forget this kindness."<sup>3</sup>

(Continued from the last page): See the elegies on Delhi by Dāgh, Āzurda and Majrūh.; "Fughān-i-Dihli" by Mīr Husain Taskīn and Nayyar. See also *Diwān*: pp. 88-89 & 107-108.

1. "Marsīa Hakīm Mahmūd Khān", *Diwān*, p. 201. Op. Cit.

2. Cf. the French-Belgian poet Max Elscamp. See pp/11-13, infra for full discussion.

3. *Diwan*, p. 60. Op. Cit.

Hali was still at Lahore when he learnt of the activities of Sir Sayyid in connection with the "Scientific Society" and "The Aligarh Institute Gazette." He had had suspicions about the sincerity of his hero but he thought otherwise when he studied him more closely.<sup>1</sup> The sad condition of his fellow believers brought him nearer Sayyid. He met him at Delhi and had lengthy talks. Sir Sayyid was a great man in many ways but in nothing lay his greatness more than in his selection of his fellow workers. His discerning eye found out how useful Hali could be to his movement and so he requested him to use his genius for something higher and nobler. He suggested him the subject of his great poem the "Musaddas". In times of severe trouble all people look back involuntarily and seek in their past, comfort, security, and new faith for future. Sir Sayyid wanted his community to know its past. His object was to accomplish the same which the authors of German Romantic Movement did for their fatherland after the battle of Jena: to raise up a broken-down and lacerated people by the force of words and poetry. And so he made his request to Hali. But the story of the conversion of Hali must be told in his own words. After giving a poetical description of his unregenerate days, when he was lost in conventional poetry, Hali gives the following description of his apocalyptic change:

"All of a sudden I saw a man of God, a hero of this field,  
going ahead on an arduous and impassable path. Many who had

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I. See "Mazāmin-i-Hali" p.108. Article on Sayyid, contributed to Aligarh Institute Gazette, 1871, p.118

accompanied him, had lagged behind through exhaustion. Many were still trudging along, with sores on lips and blisters on feet, breathless and haggard. But that persevering man, their leader, was as fresh as when he started. He went on, careless of the fatigue, unmindful of the lagging ~~behind~~ companions, and fearless of the distant objective. There was a magnetic, a hypnotic something about him. A glance from him and the object was mesmerised, following him unconsciously, with closed eyes and full faith. One of these glances fell on me also and did its work. Worn out and exhausted as I was with twenty years' wanderings, I too joined him in the same arduous path. I had neither a set aim nor steadfastness of purpose, but there was a powerful hand which was dragging me along.

The heart that used to escape the charms of beautiful youths,  
An old hoary man took it away with but one glance!

A true well-wisher of the nation, who is called by that name by all except his own community and who wants every enervated idler to be up and doing like himself, to serve his brethren, reprimanded me and put me to shame, saying, 'it is disgraceful to profess to be man (gifted with speech) and not to use the tongue given by God... The nation is in a ruinous state. The dear ones are facing ignominious degradation. The gentry is reduced to dust. Learning is at an end. Religion exists in name. Stark penury dominates every home. There is a wail of poverty on every lip. The morals have collapsed and are on further downward march. Dark clouds of bigotry are enveloping the nation. The chains of conventions and customs are on every foot. The necks of all bear the yoke of ignorance and imitation. The rich who could have proved useful to the community, are careless. The religious leaders who have a great hold on the masses, are unaware of the requirements of the times. In such a state of affairs the little that one can do is much. All of us are in the same boat and in the safety of the boat lies the safety of all. Others have written and are writing; but poetry, which has a natural appeal of its own and is the property of the Arabs and the rightful heritage of the Muslims, has not yet been tried to awaken the nation. Although it is evident that when other plans have failed, this too is not likely to result in much, but in such grave situations the mind of man is always swayed by two considerations: firstly, that we cannot do anything, and secondly, that we ought to do something. The former resulted in nothing but the latter revolutionised the world.

Although it was difficult to obey the order and it was by no means easy to bear the burden of this service, the magical speech had its effect. It had come from the heart and found its way into the heart. There was a tumult in the mind which was sad and dejected since years. The stale curry boiled up. A sad heart and a rotting brain, rendered useless by recurring ailments, were induced to the task and a "Musaddas was started." (Introduction to Musaddas. pp. I-4)

The passage not only tells of the conversion of Hali in spirit under the influence of Sir Sayyid, but also throws a flood of light on the restless psychology of the great actors in the drama of the national revival. We get here a clear picture of the gloom which had settled on the Muslim mind in the period under review. But it is a gloom which has streaks of light also. The reformers have an arduous uphill march but they are not daunted by difficulties. They believe ~~that~~ in action and strenuousness, their attitude being that of Matthew Arnold's in "The Last Wood":

Creep into thy narrow bed,  
 Creep, and let no more be said!  
 Vain thy onset! all stand fast.  
 Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!  
 Geese are swans, and swans are geese,  
 Let them have it how they will!  
 Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee?  
 Better men fared thus before thee;  
 Fired their ringing shot and pass'd,  
 Hotly charged and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!  
 Let the victors, when they come,  
 When the forts of folly fall,  
 Find thy body by the wall.

## XVI.

The "Musaddas", originally called "Madd-ò-Jazr-i-Islam", is divided into three parts: the condition of the pre-Islamic Arabia; the birth of the Prophet, the rise of Islam, its achievements and contribution to the culture of the world: its decline in India, with a scathing denunciation of the unworthy successors of the glorious progenitors. The poem begins

dramatically with Hippocrates telling an inquirer how every malady has its remedy but if the self-willed patient looks upon the physician's injunctions as mad talk, the efficiency of the treatment does not avail. Applying it to his own 'diseased' community, Hali develops another simile: a ship caught in a whirlpool, the shore far away, the howling gale threatening to engulf it any minute and the crew enjoying a comfortable sleep, supremely oblivious of their impending doom.

This is followed by a description of the Arabia of the "Jāhiliyya", steeped in ignorance, superstition, barbarism and licentiousness. Warring tribes contending with each other, vendetta, clannish feuds, open profligacy, idol-worship, infanticide, cruel treatment of women—such is Hali's picture of this Arabia.

Then came the Prophet. Swept away by enthusiasm and love Hali is thrilled by lyrical inspiration and writes a few stanzas which defy analysis. His soul is on his lips. The message, the struggle, and the triumph of the Prophet are described with dramatic brevity. The darkness is dispelled. A metamorphosis takes place; a nation, a new force comes into existence. The once indolent Arabs, galvanised into activity, go forth to offer the world what they have been blessed with—the One-ness of God and the One-ness of Man. Their faith brings the known world under their feet and they begin the development of the arts of peace. The civilised nations of today owe their emancipation to these "Dwellers of the Desert."

This leads to the third and the main part of the poem. The

religion which had infused a new spirit in the decadent world becomes corrupt in India. Moral disintegration sets in. Religious dissensions, bigotry, narrow-mindedness, avarice, jealousy, ignorance and luxury eat away into the very vitals of the nation. The Empire collapses. Hali boils with indignation. He vehemently denounces the secular and the temporal leaders. He rails against the care-free rich, the complacent and self-centred "Ulamā", the narrow-minded priests and the demoralised poets who have turned the crystal-clear stream of poetry into a sinking cesspool.

The concluding portion of the poem was rather depressing and Hali added an appendix of 152 stanzas at the instance of Sir Sayyid. It strikes a hopeful note. Hali finds signs of activity around him and exhorts his community to assimilate the learning of the West and regain its glory. But since it lacks that strong personal emotion which impelled him to write the "Musaddas", we miss its fire and force.

In subsequent editions a "Munājāt" was added in a different form and metre. It is a touching appeal to the founder of Islam to come to the rescue of his helpless followers.

Such is the outline of the poem which at once raised Hali to the first rank of Urdu poets. Well could he say with Byron that he woke one morning and found himself famous. Its influence was immense. To quote Dr. Bailey, "no single poem has had so great an effect on the Urdu-speaking world."<sup>1</sup> The country felt

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I. Dr. T. Grahame Bailey: "Urdu Literature", Heritage of India Series, p. 95.

itself throbbing with a new consciousness. The Ālīgarh Movement was a success. The best compliment was paid by Sir Sayyid.

Acknowledging the receipt of a copy, he wrote to Hali:

"I got your kind letter with a copy of the "Musaddas". I could not leave it till I had finished it; and when I had finished it, I felt sorry that the book had an end. It would be perfectly correct to regard it the harbinger of a new era in poetry. I cannot well describe the clarity, the beauty and the flow of its style. One wonders how such a realistic subject, so completely free from all exaggeration, falsehood and far-fetched conceits, could have been treated with such elegance, charm and effect. There are a number of stanzas which cannot be read without tears. No doubt, that which comes from the heart, strikes the heart. I admit that I induced you to take it up and count it to be one of my good deeds. When God would ask me what I had brought, I would submit, 'The Musaddas; I requested Hali to write it. I have nothing else to say."

#### XVII.

The "Musaddas" was followed by a number of "Qit'āt" and "Tarkīb Bands", the latter usually written to order for the annual Muhammadan Educational Conference. The most important of these minor "Millī" poems is "Shikwa-e.Hind", written in 1887, in "Tarkīb" form. Its subject is much the same as that of the "Musaddas" though much condensed. Hali accuses India as the "Great Devourer of Nations" and complains that under the enervating influence of its climate, the Muslims became effete and degraded and lost not only their political power but also their love of learning and cultural advancement.

Hali had not quite given up his so-called "natural" verse and during these years he wrote "Zamzama-e-Qaisrī", the Jubilee Ode, "Wāiz wa Shāir", "Daulat aur Waqt", "Nang-i-Khidmat", "Phūṭ aur Eka", "Chup ki Dad", "Bewa ki Munājāt", "Huqūq-i-Aulād" and "Tuḥfat-ul-Ikhwān". The last four strike a social note and

were written between 1887-1890. Some of these, with many others, were published in one volume-"Majmūah-e-Nazm-i-Hali"- in 1890.

In prose he wrote "Ḥayāt-i-Sādī" in 1881 and the Life of Ḥakīm Nāsir Khusrāu Balkhī with his "Safarnāma" in 1883. The latter is in Persian. In the same year he edited the letters of Shefta with a selection of his Persian prose. The influence of the study of Sādī is traceable in some of his "Qitāt", which remind the reader of the fables of "Būstān", and the "Qaṣīdas", particularly the one presented to the present Nizām on his ascension to the throne.

In 1890 appeared the famous "Muqaddima" of his Dīwān and in 1893 the Dīwān itself. These were followed by "Yādgar-i-Ghālib" in 1896 and "Hayat-i-Jawid" in 1901. The last mentioned had been started by Qāzī Sirāj-ud-Dīn Ahmad, Bar-at-Law, Rawalpindi, a great admirer of Sir Sayyid and a man of commendable literary merits. He had collected a vast material by spending a lot of money, time and energy, but, on learning that Hali wanted to take up the work, liberally placed it at his disposal. The only other books of Hali published during his life-time, besides the Persian and Arabic Dīwāns, are the volumes of his "Mazāmin" which he mostly wrote for Ālīgarh Institute Gazette and Tahzīb-ul-Akhlāq, and the "Rubāiyāt", edited by Rahmat Ullah Rād. The "Mazāmin", thirty three in all, were collected by Wahīd-ud-Dīn Salīm to be the first publication of the Hali Press, Panipat, founded by Hamīd-ud-Dīn. They deal with religious, social and political subjects and are valuable for the study of the development of the views of Hali. Some are critical reviews. All

were written after 1871.<sup>1</sup>

The "Rubā'iyāt" were translated into English prose by G.E.Ward in 1904 and rendered into verse by C.S.Tute in 1933.

#### XVIII.

In 1887 when Nawāb Āsmān Jāh of Hyderabad, the great patron of Ālīgarh College, came to pay a visit to that institution, Hali was presented to him and was favoured with a monthly stipend of Rs.75/- raised to Rs.100/- in 1891 when he accompanied Sir Sayyid to Hyderabad as a member of the deputation which waited on the Nawab to solicit his assistance for the College. Hali retired from service after this.

In 1904 the Government conferred on him the title of "Shams-ul-Ūlamā" (The Sun of the Learned) in recognition of his services to literature.

Hali died peacefully on the last day of 1914 at Panipat, hearing the Holy Quran being recited to him. His death was mourned throughout India and all the Muslim institutions were closed in his honour. A number of "marṣias" were written.

#### XIX.

Hali's one ambition was to write novels after the English style for the reform of society, thus showing a life-long consistency in his utilitarian conception of art. Maulvī Abdul Haq offered to read to him select English novels in translation if he would accompany him to Aurangabad, but it was a few days before his death when he was staying at Farid Abad

I. These "Mazāmin", the lectures and other articles of Hali are being published by Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, Aurangabad, as "Maqālāt-i-Hali". The first of the two contemplated volumes has come out this year and contains thirty two essays.

to recover his health.

His unpublished poems were collected and published by Muhammad Ismā'īl as "Jawāhirāt-i-Halī". They contain some juvenile poems of real merit, particularly one about Sayyida, the daughter of Ghulām-us-Saqalain, of whom he seems to have been very fond. "Gharīān and Ghante" is another delightful poem. The elegy on Muhsin-ul-Mulk and some of the "Rubā'īs" are in the true Halī vein.

His letters too have been published and <sup>will be</sup> ~~are~~ very valuable for his future biographer.

## XX.

One important aspect of the development of Halī's views yet requires consideration-his opinion of the English and of the Western culture. Halī had had no direct contact with the English while at Delhi. It was when he came to Lahore that he got an opportunity to meet Dr. Leitner, Col. Holroyd, Major Fuller, Mr. Brandreth and others, all of whom were great Orientalists and men of wide culture. It was again at Lahore that he first got into touch with English literature and Western philosophies and sciences. From all that he saw and read Halī could only reach one conclusion: the undeniable superiority of the Western people and Western culture. To this he first gave expression in his poem "Hubb-i-Waṭan" wherein he touchingly refers to the sad dissensions of his own countrymen which repeatedly led to India's subjugation by the foriegners and then pays a tribute to the higher political wisdom and character of the English.

When Halī came under the influence of Sir Sayyid he began to

believe firmly that the rejuvenation of the Muslims lay in their acquisition of Western education and exhorted them to adapt themselves to the new situation. In one of his earliest articles "Time-Change with the Times." contributed to "Tahzīb-ul Akhlāq", he discussed the problem at length and invited his nation to submit to the inevitable, saying:

"Those who do not follow the times and want to make time follow them, are the victims of a delusion. A few fish cannot stem the tide of the river; a few bushes cannot change the direction of the wind."<sup>1</sup>

Gifted with unusual commonsense, Hali realised the essential weakness of his position. He felt that his advice was not without its dangerous aspects and warned his readers against them. But whatever the nature of his views, his sincerity is above all suspicions. He writes:

"Muslamans of India! Are you still in that world in which your ancestors spent their lives? Are you still waiting for the crops they sowed? That world passed away years ago; those crops have been washed away. Open your eyes and see who you are and where you are. The coins in your pockets are not worth a cowrie; the goods in your stores cannot even be accepted free. The oil in your lamps has burnt away; the water in your fields has dried up. Beware; your boat is leaking and the river is rising up every minute.: your caravan is on foot and the stages are getting arduous. Perhaps it may be thought that after this introduction I shall persuade you to study English, to use chairs and tables or forks and knives, or ask you to wear English dress. No. All I want is that you should follow the right path, whatever it be, which may get you out of the wretched state you are in. Choose any course you prefer, only let your steps take you forward, for Time is shouting: He whose two days are alike has lost."<sup>2</sup>

Hali was thus actuated by a noble motive: the rejuvenation and uplift of his nation. When he wanted the Muslims to "Change with the times" he simply meant that they should be progressive

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1. "Mazāmin-i-Hāli". p.14. Op. Cit.  
2. Ibid. pp.19-20.

and not merely imitative. He was against the forces of conservatism and inertia, against the social forms which had become obstinately fixed. He says in the same article:

"Do you know what it is that does not allow you to rise? What it is that has so tied you down that you cannot move? Remember, it is your absurd imitation. It has not only made you powerless in matters religious, but it has also robbed you of the use of your commonsense in trade and commerce, arts and crafts and agriculture, in fact everything. It has put chains on your feet in every walk of life. It has made you helpless like the bird whose wings are clipped and whose eyes are sewn: You have neither the power of flight nor the vision to foresee. Imitation has saved you from all the worries of moral and material progress, assuring you that your ancestors long ago completed everything that was to be done and that nothing else is possible. You believe that the sum total of human wisdom had all been distributed between the past generations and that they have left no opportunity for you to prove that you too are human beings like them."<sup>1</sup>

There are writers, especially of the Hyderabad school, who find fault with Hali for his inculcation of "change-with-the-times" counsel.<sup>2</sup> They do not seem to have studied their author, and, as is evident, postulate from the motto on the title-page of his *Dīwān*. Hali's sense of patriotism and his pride in the past of his nation were very keen and when he was called upon to translate that piece of chauvanism by Mr. Stokes,<sup>3</sup> he added a foot-note in which he expressed his revised opinion of the West.<sup>4</sup> His closer study revealed to Hali that the motivation of Western progress was acquisitiveness and exploitation rather than service; that the imposing edifice of Western life was merely an empty façade. Behind it lay warfare, aggrandisement and class-conflict.

1. "Mazāmin-i-Hali". p. 21. Op. Cit.

2. See Osmania University Magazine, Vol. IV No. 1936-31 and "Urdu ke Paighāngo Shuārā" by Ghulam Mohayyaud-Dīn Zor

3. "Tābikh-i-Zamzama-e-Qaisrī" translated at the instance of Mr. Davis Commr, Delhi (see next page).

4. Ibid. pp 117-123.

"Peace is the time of the preparation for war;  
 They empty the gun only to reload it.  
 Let them not be over-jubilant over their triumph:  
 Their pride of glory will one day bring them down.  
 Knowledge, morals, arms\_what are they?  
 All the devices of murder.  
 I hear human love and sympathy are on the ascendency\_  
 They will invent new guns and cannons."<sup>1</sup>

And again:

"The plunder of the barbarians is not without its horrors,  
 But God protect us from the plunder which is moral and  
 intellectual!  
 Flowers, nor buds, nor leaves hast thou left, O Plucker;  
 What is it? Gardening, loot or robbery?"<sup>2</sup>

Hali's belief that the Western education was the panacea of all evils also received a rude shock. He was disappointed in the product of the Aligarh College with its creed of practical "Indifferentism" in every matter, particularly religion. He was also disgusted with its low ideals, bad manners and Anglo-mania. In an article "Are we Dead or Alive?", written in 1893, he says:

"Their ambition is government service. They have no confidence in their own hands and arms. They depend upon recommendations. The only difference between them and a poor oriental scholar is that while they have learnt slavery in a regular way, according to the needs of the time, he has not. After getting into service they give up their studies for ever. The condition of those not in service is still worse. They mention with great pride the deeds of the authors, inventors and reformers of Europe but themselves cannot do anything beyond recounting the exploits of these foreigners and claiming the tribute of admiration for this knowledge. They very respectfully urge the rights of the Indians to the attention of the Government but never care to think of the duties they owe to their own nation. They are very stormy in criticising the administration of the Government but do not reflect on the administration of their own house. Many of our youngmen have returned from England after the completion of their studies there. They have touched the 'philosopher's stone which transmutes copper into gold; they have spent a

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 (continued from last page)The poem was first translated into Urdu prose and Mr.Davis then asked Hali to render it into verse. He had only finished the first of the three parts when Mr.Stoke wanted it to be done in Persian.Hali expressed his inability on health grounds and it was translated conjointly by several persons  
 1. Diwan pp.99-100.Op.Cit.  
 2. Ibid.p.120 in Persian.

valuable part of their lives in the midst of a nation which regards patriotism an article of its faith; they have breathed for years the air where knowledge grows under the shadow of action. But when they come back to India, they remind us of the verse:

"He went to Mecca, to Medina and to Karbala;  
He did a lot of wandering but returned as he was."

Of patriotism and fellow-feeling they have not even that much which they possessed when getting into the boat on leaving their home. They begin to hate their nation; they feel ashamed to move in their own society. They look upon their countrymen with even greater contempt than the English. If the English call them half-civilised, they call their countrymen uncivilised."<sup>1</sup>

Much the same views are expressed in his poem "Nang-i-Khidmat" which was inspired by his revolt against the craze for Government service.<sup>2</sup> A believer in self-help and courage to persevere, Hali had some very brave views on the dignity of labour which translated freely read as follows:

"There is self-respect in this, as there is dignity, and nobility. Learn some profession, some trade, some handicraft. Cultivate your fields and discover the first principles of national prosperity. Come out of your homes and acquire 'savoir faire' derived from travelling. In a word become **MEN** and learn self-confidence and courage. Do not go about bowing and scraping to patrons. Help yourself and make the selves the means of your advancement."<sup>3</sup>

1. "Mazāmin-i-Hali", pp.99-100. Op.Cit.

2. Here are two typical stanzas:

وزندون رات پوریں ٹھوڑی آتے دود۔ سنڈیں۔ چھٹیاں دن رات دلتا دود۔

چاپوڑی سے دل آہ ابر کا لہتا دود۔ ذوالنفس کزالت کا چکنا دود۔

تا کہ ذلت سے لبریز نہ کی عادت ہو جائے

نفس حسب طرح بنے لائق ذلت ہو جائے

کوئی دفتر نہیں اور کوئی بھری لہی کہ جہاں گدی ہو ایک ادھر لڑائی کی

نتے شرق میں ہیں گڑاگڑا ہائی تنہا بیہوشیا فریب سے اک دم جاری

ہوں ایسے کا زور جانتے ہی سہی رام  
کوئی آقا نہیں تھا کہ میں اس سے ختم

3. "Bulchand Dayaram": A Modern Urdu Poet, East and West, Vol. IV, No. 46, August, 1905. Considerably altered.

To the same subject he reverts in some of his quatrains:

"What fruit is in each lap, is the fruit of labour here.  
And all that is harvested are God's blessings on labour.  
To be 'Shepherd of his people' was not given to Moses,  
Until he had tended the goats in the land of Midian."<sup>1</sup>

"In effort lies the first pledge of success for any man;  
And next he ought to pray for help from the Almighty.  
It was not until he used hand and arm that Noah  
Obtained the boon of rescuing his race from the deluge."<sup>2</sup>

"Work takes the side of Life for all human kind;  
No zest is in the living save with some work being done.  
You live? then be doing something to show you are alive;  
What death in life have they, who live like corpses?"<sup>3</sup>

And because Hali with Carlyle is the champion of the dignity of labour, his spirit is essentially democratic. He is the preacher of progress because he believes that man has vast potentialities to rise; because everyone is divinely gifted with nobility of purpose and has immense opportunities to work and make his own destiny:

"There are signs of capability in the wholly untaught;  
Disguised among savages are human beings-  
They are innocent of any garb of education; otherwise  
Men of Tus and Raz are hidden in these shapes."<sup>4</sup>

And arch-missionary in the age of missionaries, his mainstay is faith-faith in himself and faith in humanity:

"It is possible that a man may become an angel,  
It is possible that no spot should remain in him of evil."

"This commonplace world you may call it a fleeting picture  
All that happens in the universe you may deem an idle tale;  
But:-when you set your purpose to any noble work,  
Think every breath you draw to be life eternal."<sup>6</sup>

The determinists are cowards; our destiny lies in our own hands:

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1. Diwan.p. I45, Op.Cit. Translation by G.E.Ward, Op.Cit.  
2. Ibid.p. I46 do do  
3. Ibid.p. I46 do do  
4. Ibid .pI4I. do do  
5. Ibid.p. I48. do do  
6. Ibid.p. I39 do do

"Those endless disputes about Fate and Freewill, creed.  
 When I looked at them, I found they do not hinge on any/  
 Those who were cowardly have always yielded to fate,  
 And those ~~who~~ possessed of courage have exercised free wi.

But keen reformer as he was, Hali espoused the cause of steady growth and development. He did not like rash schemes which defeat their own purpose:

"For washing O reformer. there is good reason left,  
 So long as any stain upon the cloth is still left;  
 Wash the stain with a will:-but do not rub so hard,  
 That no stain upon the cloth and no cloth be left."<sup>2</sup>

## XXI.

The personal character of Hali, like his verse, was simple and sincere; the man and the style were one. He was a serious man who saw life as a serious business and chiefly relied, for making the best of it, upon a serene commonsense. To do the useful thing, to say the courageous thing, to contemplate the beautiful thing that is enough for one man's life; few men have had better opportunity, few of them have availed themselves of it better than Hali.

The great point in the character of Hali was his ardent enthusiasm which charmed and melted all who came in contact with him. Even at this distant time when the appeal of his verse, which was mostly topical, is not so great, he still possesses the power of communicating the same contagious enthusiasm which roused his contemporaries. It is not possible to read his eager, burning words without catching some of the fire which animates him. Brave and cheerful to the very last,

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 1. Diwan. p. 144, Op. Cit. Translation by G. E. Ward, Op. Cit.

2. Ibid. p. 147.

he reminds us of those "select ones" of whom he says:

"They are blithe in adversity\_as if they were successful;  
They fight with their feebleness\_as if they were athletes;  
Their hearts are their measures,who are bringing to a close  
Their old age\_laughing and talking\_as if they were youths."

It was a great and a true compliment which Sir Theodore Morrison paid to the services of Hali to his nation, when he remarked while addressing the Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1905:

"From a moral point of view, the Muhammadan aristocracy and gentry has not, in spite of its great wealth and possessions, done so much for their community as this one poor poet."<sup>2</sup>

The life of Hali was simple and undramatic but then the gods approve the depth and not the tumult of the soul.

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1. Diwān.p.136;Op.Cit.Translation by G.E.Ward,Op.Cit.

2. And Iqbāl paid a still greater compliment to his poetry. Hali was to recite a poem on the stage of "Anjuman-i-Himāyat-i-Islam",Lahore. Too old to rise himself, he asked Iqbāl to read his poem for him. Proud of the honour conferred on him, Iqbāl improvised the following quatrain and read it before reciting Hali's poem:

"Known is throughout the world\_the name of Hali.  
Full to the brim with the wine of truth is the Cup of Hali.  
I am the Prophet of the Realms of Poesy:  
On my lips is descending the verse of Hali.

## Chapter

## IV.

The Poet.  
I.

Hali is one of the central figures in the early Islamic Renaissance in India. If we were asked to choose one man who sums up in himself almost all its aspects we would name Hali. True, it was Sir Sayyid who unsealed the fount of poetry in him and gave a bent to his mind, yet that does in no way belittle his importance as the foremost literary figure of his age. Sir Sayyid does tower above him, no doubt, in sheer stature. His greatness lives in his personality as Johnson's. But in literary output Hali will always rank above his master. Sir Sayyid is a greater man; Hali is the greater man of letters.

## II.

I have elsewhere dwelt at some length on some of the aspects of the Indian Renaissance.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it would contribute to a better understanding of the poetry of Hali to discuss some of its other sides that have strongly entered into his poetry. The poet does express his own personality, but his personality is to a large extent the product of the forces impinging on it. A study of these forces is indispensable in the case of a poet like Hali.

The Renaissance in India, especially the Islamic Renaissance, is totally different from the Italian Renaissance. The latter was essentially aesthetic and pagan. It was the discovery of the beauty and joy in life which Christianity with its other-worldly ideals had crushed or at least suppressed for nearly a thousand years. The Renaissance in India is like the Renaissance in

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I. See Chapter II.

Germany in that it brought with itself an extraordinary development of intellectual and moral sensibility. The earlier reformers were not aesthetes revelling in a world of beauty. They were earnest reformers fighting against ignorance and superstition which usurped the name of religion and to which the masses clung with a fanatical zeal. All these intellectual and moral factors are strongly reflected in the works of Halli. For once there is very little of love poetry; nor is there much of a genuine appreciation of Nature for her own sake. It was a brooding and introspective age and poetry tends more and more to become a criticism of life.

The gloomy note in the poetry of Halli is much more deepened by the downfall of the Moghal Empire. With a poet's love of the past he could not tear himself from the painful memories. He is for ever haunted by them. Edith Sichel compares the European Renaissance to the painting of Adam by Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel extending his hand, unwasted by fast and asceticism, to light.<sup>1</sup> The Islamic Renaissance, at least in its earlier stages, differs very much from the European Renaissance. Its strenuousness and hope are not unmixed with gloom. Not the Adam of Michael Angelo but Rodin's "Le Penseur" is a symbol of the Islamic Renaissance.

All these factors have strongly influenced Halli's poetry. It is didactic, elegaic and satiric. The last element is yet to be accounted for.

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I. Edith Sichel: "The Renaissance", Home University Library of Modern Knowledge. p.7.

Satire is the staple product of a changing age. There was no satire in India before modern age. There was a lot of invective arising out of personal jealousies and enmities, but no satire. For satire presupposes a departure from an established standard of conduct; and this is only possible in a period of transition when new ideals are fighting against or replacing traditional views. The Islamic Renaissance was such a period. Its pioneers were primarily reformists. They saw their community politically prostrate and intellectually stagnant. They wanted to awaken it to its perilous condition, and if need be to shake it rudely out of its deadly stupor. A violent discrepancy in the life of a community necessarily produces a satirist and the history of literature bears out the contention. Juvenal, Swift, Butler, Voltaire, Nikolai Gogol, Boileau, Racine, La Fontaine and Shaw had to be satirists: the state of their society demanded it. Discussing the genesis of Satire Gilbert Cannan writes:

"There is a sort of indignation which more than any other moral affection drags poets down from their poetry. To realize poetry in art is not enough; art ever leads back to life, and there is always, beyond the poetic impulse and its expression, the desire to realize poetry in life...Art for such poets is the sword of freedom...Moments come in their lives when they swing the sword in their hands, and sharpen its edge to slay those men, and the follies and abuses that seem to them to stand in their way."I.

It was much the same with Hali and his contemporaries. They turned upon the life before them and "peeled it off skin after skin until they came to the rotten heart."

The modern Urdu poetry, therefore, has a strong leaven of  
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 I. Gilbert Cannan: "Satire", The Art and Craft of Letters, London, Martin Secker, 1914. pp. 8-9.

satire in it when it is not satire pure and simple. Hali's satire is mostly social with a few incursions into politics. Shibli formally annexes politics to satire. Ismā'il is very hard on his times and satirises the chief professions of his time with good humour. Akbar enters the list as the champion of the spiritual past against the materialism of the present. The rank and file who made fun of India in its more superficial aspects slumber peacefully in the pages of the Oudh Punch that redoubtable champion of the old and after life's fitful fever they sleep well.

The Indian Renaissance is therefore a convenient label for an extremely complex movement made of such diverse strands as religious, social, intellectual, economic, political. All these elements reacted strongly on the literature of the period. Amongst Urdu writers there is none who mirrors the Renaissance so completely in his writings as Hali.

### III.

The poetical talents of Hali reached their highest water-mark in the "Musaddas".<sup>1</sup> It is the longest and some think the best poem in Urdu of all times.<sup>2</sup>

In form the poem is cast in six-line stanzas, a quatrain followed by two rhyming lines.<sup>3</sup> It is entirely written in the "Mutaqārib Sālim" metre, each line comprising four feet, each consisting of one unstressed syllable followed by two stressed ones. If we represent short syllables by a  and a stressed one

I. Vide supra.

2. Dr. T. Grahame Bailey. O.P. Cit.

3. Vide supra.

by — the line would read:

— — — | — — — | — — — | — — —

Apart from its literary importance, which is very considerable, the "Musaddas" has a very great historical importance. It marks the beginning of a new era in Urdu poetry. The new Urdu poetry, as already shown, had come into existence many years before. Both Hali and Āzād had written a considerable body of verse at Lahore and enjoyed some vogue. Ismā'īl of Meerut had anticipated Hali with 'naturalistic' verse that reads startlingly fresh even today. But they had not hit the popular taste, or even been able to make a case for the new school. The greater part of 'naturalistic' verse was singularly lacking in poetic qualities. Āzād's poems are elaborate compositions forced out of an unwilling brain and without a single flash of poetry. Hali is slightly better in "Barkhā Rut" but his other poems do not touch the emotions. Intellectual in their contents they leave the reader cold.

Moreover the poetry of pure nature could not touch the hearts of most people. The Nineteenth century in India is like the Age of Tennyson in England—a period of Sturm und Drang, when a thousand teasing problems were forcing themselves on the nation's mind. The age was sicklied over with thought and it was hard to enjoy nature with the calm detachment of a youthful people like the Elizabethans. The great problem before the reader was the national construction. They were waging a grim war against the past. The "Musaddas" made such an extraordinary impression because it 'jumped' with the predisposition of the people.

IIO.

Dislike it as you may on aesthetic grounds\_and our dislike is not wholly unjustifiable\_the trend of poetry in India is more and more towards what Arnold calls 'a criticism of life.'

The "Musaddas", therefore, was an epoch-making work. It firmly established the new school by producing a master-piece. It has also exerted a striking influence on all future poetry. An ever-widening stream of 'Milli' poetry, sometimes good but mostly bad, which shows no sign of slackness, testifies to the impetus given by the Musaddas to Urdu poetry.<sup>1</sup>

From another point of view the importance of the "Musaddas" is immense. It is a work in which we find crystallised the Renaissance mind. There is no other work which gives such an accurate picture of the intellectual and moral ferment of the age. Despite the furious blasts of anger we have a unique picture of a world standing on tip-toe to witness a new and glorious rebirth.

And if we find a glimpse of a community astir with great hopes we also get a realistic picture of the moral and intellectual enslavement of the people. Perhaps Hali<sup>is</sup> unconsciously exaggerating the degeneration of the people. Be it as it may, there is no other work which gives such a telling picture of the intellectual unrest of the age as this one poem.

The prose works of Sir Sayyid are also a faithful transcript of that long and desperate struggle but being prose they lack the concentration which the form of poetry bestows; for that very reason they lack the flaming ardour of Hali. Compared with  
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I.Vide infra.

### III.

Hali's incandescent fire they are stone cold.

But the phenomenal vogue Hali enjoyed is only partially due to the subject-matter. The secret of his success lay in the execution, in the form given to the emotions. The "Musaddas" is a great poem because of the perfect fusion of form and matter. In all great art form and spirit are indissolubly bound up with each other. It is through form and in form that spirit shines; and contrariwise spirit is the form that doth the body make. Hali makes such a deep impression not only through the poignancy and sincerity of his emotions; it is also because through his artistry he succeeds in infecting the reader with his emotions.

The critical mood is the very antithesis of the creative. Hali did not deliberately set about selecting the right form for his emotion. But when the artist is profoundly stirred he intuitively selects the inevitable form for it. It is only when we approach his work critically and attempt to analyse our reactions do we know the elements which, fused together by the alchemy of the poet's genius, cast such a spell on us.

The foremost quality of the "Musaddas" is its flaming sincerity. The poem has been written at white heat. It is the welling forth of a full heart in the most unpremeditated verses. As you read it the emotions seem to burn through the vesture of language and coruscate before you like a flame in a temple. In the whole range of Urdu literature, modern or ancient, there is nothing that can even approach it in the wild intensity of its passion. The elegies of Anis have something of Hali's fire; but

they seem vitiated by a false taste for decoration and exaggeration peculiar to the age. Anis seems to be bent upon harrowing the feelings of his readers to extract the full toll of tears. He lingers too long on each detail to agonise the reader. Hali's sincerity is overwhelming. There is hardly one false note in the whole poem.

The metre and the stanzaic form are best adapted to express the high-wrought mood. The metre chosen is one of the most galloping. Its eight accented syllables ring like the metallic hoofs of cavalry in full charge. The effect of this speed is considerably increased by the first four rhymes. The transition from one line to another is easy and pleasant as in the Lady of Shalott, where the reader glides over the first four lines and is only arrested by the change in metre and rhyme in the next line.<sup>1</sup> The verse has not only a soothing effect on the ear and contributes to swiftness, it is also useful in another way. The laws of versification in Urdu are extremely rigid.<sup>2</sup> The end-stop couplet like Pope's is the rule.

"Enjambement" is permissible, though rarely used; but there are no medial-stops. The unit of versification is the line, rigid like the bed of Proustes. The thought or emotion must be confined to it. This either lends to condensation as in the case of Ghalib who finds the ghazal form too cramping,

Ba qadr-i-shauq nahin zarf-i-tangna-e-ghazal  
Kuchh aur chahie wusat mire bayan ke lie

- 
- I. Lying robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right  
The leaves upon her falling light  
Thro' the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot.

2. Vide supra.

or leads to padding, as the following in Iqbal:

خوشنید وہ عالم کر خیز  
نہ نہ والہ پیام بر خیز  
نکسا ہوتا ہے ہمتاں کا  
جز سے ان اہلیں در در ہمتاں

The unit for Hali is the stanza. He has therefore ample elbow room for his moods. Generally, he confines himself to one thought only which is fully developed. If it is soon exhausted he can put together two or three of an allied nature in one stanza as the case may be. Hence nothing is stiff or unnatural about the poem. The lines have the flow of prose about them.

To transmit his moods unhampered Hali discarded the superfluous technique of the feminine rhyme wherever necessary. Such lines as the following owe their naturalness and freedom to his simple rhymes:

یہاں ہوئی غیرتِ حق و حرکت  
بڑھا جائے بوسے ابر حرکت  
ادا خاک لعلی نے کی وہ ور لعلیت  
پے آنی تے جس کی دگر بندہ  
ہوئی پہلو آئے سے سویدا  
دعاے خلیل اور نوید مسیا  
وہ بھی جا کر تھا عورت ہادی  
عرب کی زین جس نہا کی بلور کی  
نہ رات گن گن بے دل میں لڑکی  
اک آواز میں لڑکی لہتی جگادی  
بڑا ہر کف مثل یہ پیغام حق سے  
رہو بخراکے دشت و جبل نام حق سے

Another very considerable feature of the "Musaddas" is its simplicity. I reserve for a separate discussion his theory of

poetic diction. Suffice it to say that Hali keeps as close as possible to the level of every day idiom in his poem. The great danger of writing in a selection of language actually in use is that one very often stumbles into the trivial like Wordsworth, or drags harsh and unmusical words with unpoetic associations. The "Musaddas" is on the whole free from gipsy phraseology which Hali unwittingly drags in his other poems. There are very few verses which jar on a musical ear or have associations which do not harmonise with the journal atmosphere but they are not many. On the whole Hali has been very successful in his use of every day speech. As will be discussed later on Hali has a great predilection for the simple but his simplicity in this poem seems due to the intensity of his emotions. There are tense and gripping moods when the poet looks straight at his objects, when all ornament is a profanation and the poet sets down his emotions in a few simple words as the following:

Had we never lov'd sae kindly  
 Had we never lov'd sae blindly  
 Never met or never parted  
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Such passages are frequent in Shakespeare, Webster or Wordsworth. Hali's simplicity at its best is due to its overwhelming sincerity.

The "Musaddas" excels in masculine energy. Prof. Lowes writing of English Poetry says that its most notable quality

"is a masculine energy that never overlooks the mass in the the detail. Ornament, prettiness, finesse are secondary qualities; boldness of conception, frankness of delineation,

directness of speech are the distinctive mark."<sup>1</sup>

Urdu poetry, on account of its connection with Persian and its perfervid emotionalism, is sickly, sentimental and effeminate. Hali looks at life with masculine eyes and has in his poetry, especially in the "Musaddas", scrupulously avoided the sentimentalists' vocabulary which has again come in vogue with Iqbal and his school.

The modern reader will probably find it hard if not altogether impossible to endorse the enthusiasm of Hali's contemporaries for the "Musaddas". The secret charm that made our fathers weep and groan over it seems to have disappeared perhaps for ever. We read it today with a shock of disappointment. Except purple passages it makes rather dull reading. What is the reason? Has some virtue passed out of the poem like the fragrance of a soiled flower? Have we grown too fastidious or had our parents a questionable taste to take this poor sop for ambrosia?

So far as I can judge the fault is neither with us nor with our fathers. It was a trumpet call for reform to the Muslims at a very critical moment in their history. Like a sleeper who finds himself on the brink of an abyss they stood aghast at their degradation. They were making spasmodic efforts to bring themselves in line with other communities. Had they been wedded to the past it would have fallen on deaf ears. But Hali was the mouthpiece of his own generation giving expression to

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I. John Livingston Lowes: "Convention and Revolt in Poetry"; London, Constable and Co., Ltd, 1909. p.313.

II6.

its hopes and fears. His invective made such a deep impression on them because their hearts were already heavy with a sense of guilt. That world has now changed; the crisis is over and we look unmoved at the tremors of our fathers.

"Let the galled jade wince our withers are unwrung."

To summarise, the "Musaddas" was a great success because it combined high artistic qualities with a mood shared with his contemporaries. It was topical verse. Since the times have changed we can no longer react to it in the same overwhelming manner as the last generation. "The book, in an absolute sense, is as it was; but one of the two factors WE that makes a 'phenomenal' book," has altered and therefore the harmony between us and the book, which was necessary to produce the desired response in us, has ceased to exist.

The "Musaddas" is like the political sonnets of Wordsworth or the Philippics of Demosthenes. They profoundly stirred their own generation but leave the present reader comparatively cold, and so it is with Hali. In the present day world when great problems confront us on all sides it is impossible to have the calmness of Sophocles who saw life dispassionately and saw it whole. We are all partisans fighting for the bit of light vouchsafed to us, and we all write for our own times. It is absurd to say writes a critic that a poet writes for all times. He writes for his own. The nursling of the immortality creed is more or less on the wane now-a-days.<sup>1</sup> This was also the creed

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I. "There is no such thing as a homogeneous 'posterity': It is as confused and lawless as the chaos from which it springs... 'Immortality,' in fact, which writers are fond of claiming for their works, is often a matter of the meekest chance, (cont:next page)

II7.

of Hali. His mission was to rouse the Muslim community to self-respect, self-effort and self-consciousness and this he did wonderfully well. If he does not carry us along it does not matter, he did not write for us.

And as the poem has been a source of spiritual sustenance and intellectual nourishment to a whole generation of readers, it is so far "good". It has served its purpose and according to Kellett there is no other definition of "goodness". The impermanence of the appeal of a work of art and even its "actual obsolescence is not in general a sign of low values, but merely the use of special circumstances for communication."

#### IV.

The "Musaddas" is hard to classify on account of the variety of its material.<sup>2</sup> It is panegyric and a satire with a liberal mixture of the didactic. Yet the satiric element predominates. The other short poems are satire pure and simple. The difference between them and the "Musaddas" is this: the "Musaddas" is full of passionate indignation like that of a Hebrew Prophet anathematising a backsliding generation. It is a great invective in which he openly denounces with savage sarcasm. In the "Qitāb" the mood of indignation has given place to a quiet sarcasm that probably probes the deeper because it is indirect. These are sixty seven in all (these include many which are not satiric)

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(continued from last page) and is no more a credit to the authors than the survival of their tombstones." E. E. Kellett: Whirligig of Taste, pp. 150-154; Hogarth Press, Ltd, 1929.

1. Ivor Armstrong Richards: "Principles of Literary Criticism", 1924 p. 222.

2. It is like what Polonius calls "Pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical, unlimited. Hamlet

the longest hardly exceeding twenty lines. Nor is their literary merit very considerable. Hali is too good-natured to be a good satirist. He is without that modicum of bitterness that goes to make a successful satirist. But these short poems are interesting because they are the first tentative effort at a literary form which matured with Akbar. They have also some historical interest in that they throw much light on the political, social and literary life of the time.

Hali is the first to introduce political satire in his works. Sir Sayyid's attitude towards England and Europe was one of deep veneration but others like Hali and Shibli did not share his views and began very early to open their eyes wide at the idol.<sup>1</sup>

In one of these short poems the "Political Speeches"<sup>2</sup> Hali satirises the political artifice and cunning of the British. They would not give themselves away under provocation or joy, who never take a step or make a promise without scope for retreat. This sort of Machiavellian statesmanship was new to India. The last two lines recall Goldsmith's dictum that the function of speech is to conceal and not to express our ideas. In the "Medical Examination of a Black and a White"<sup>3</sup> the sarcasm is much more pronounced. The point at issue is not so much the superiority complex of the Englishman as the contemptuous opinion of the weakness of an Indian.

In "Law"<sup>4</sup> and another short poem he cynically compares 'Law'

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I. Vide supra.

2. Diwan. p-22. Op. Cit.

3. Ibid. p. 37.

4. Ibid. p. 44-45.

to a spider's net which can bind the weak, but which the strong can brush aside. The poem is evidently the criticism of some event. The inference is clear that Hali did not believe in the moral superiority of the Europeans which with Sir Sayyid was an article of faith. This note occurs again and again. Hali boldly expresses his views on the political and economic problems and is free from the illusions of his colleagues. In "The Way to Consolidate the Empire"<sup>1</sup> he hints in four biting lines to the policy of "Divide et Impera" and in two of his ghazals deals with the political and economic exploitation of India by England thus

Hali was/the first to attach politics to poetry. After him the stream of political verse widened greatly and Shibli, Akbar and Iqbal have more and more unmasked the modern European civilisation.<sup>3</sup>

A few other satires may also be mentioned in passing. In "Criticism"<sup>4</sup>, in which a father advises his son to excel in learning and scholarship and having failed therein to run down writers and poets, the fling is evidently at his contemporaries who ridiculed his new poetry. There is a personal note again in the "Ignorance of Contemporaries"<sup>5</sup> the imitation stone admits its inferiority to the jewel but says that in an uncritical world it is none the worse for being counterfeit.

A similar note is again discernible in the "Decline of the Poet

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1. Diwan. p. 47. Op. Cit.

2. Vide supra.

3. Vide Infra.

4. Diwan. p. 20. Op. Cit.

5. Ibid.

of Delhi",<sup>1</sup> in which he satirises the so-called "Masters of Urdu" who refused to recognise his poetry because his birthplace was Panipat and not Delhi.

حالی و توہینِ بیکار و دلہنہ از سب زہنہ کی بیخودگی

In "Apostasy of Sir Sayyid", "Reason of Sir Sayyid's Opposition" and "Refutation of Sayyid's Writings"<sup>2</sup> he is satirising Sayyid's opponents. In the first he defines Islam as the belief in Sayyid's apostasy. In the second a critic of Sayyid is made to confess that his opposition merely springs from jealousy. In the third an impecunious writer who has failed in all professions is advised to write a refutation of the writings of Sayyid.

Nor are these poems lacking in social satire. "Raising a Loan for a Pilgrimage to Mecca"<sup>3</sup> unmasks the hypocrisy of the people who make religion an instrument for exploiting the ignorant laity. "The Betrothal of a Daughter"<sup>4</sup> has a strong social note. "How Civilised People treat a Beggar"<sup>5</sup> is directed against educated India. Hali is of opinion that education serves more and more to widen the gulf between the educated and the uneducated classes.<sup>6</sup>

#### V.

Hali could never reach the passionate intensity of the "Musaddas" except in his well known elegy on the death of Ghalib. The poem has fluency and verbal music and is an excellent

1. Diwān. p.28-29. Op. Cit.

2. Ibid. p.23, 26 & 30 respectively.

3. Ibid. p.24.

4. Ibid. p.29-30.

5. Ibid. p.35.

6. See "Āzādī kī Qadr". p.25, "Inglīstān kī Āzādī etc". p.25, "Nation kī Tārīf". p.27-28, "Qaht-i-Ahl-Ullah", p.26, "Īsrāf", p.36 and "Qaum kī pāsdārī". p.52, for other important satires.

example of the new elegy free from the exaggeration and unreality of the old poetry. Hali sticks to facts\_facts which have taken colour, from a loving imagination stirred to its depth, but facts nevertheless. The "Musaddas" on the death of Ḥakīm Mahmūd Khān is not in the best vein but is more pathetic. It is not so much an elegy on the death of the Ḥakīm as a dirge on the extinction of Delhi. To Hali Delhi was not different from the great people who made it famous and therefore the Ḥakīm is for Hali the symbol of the departing genius of Islam. In the elegies on Sir Sayyid and Muhsin-ul-Mull the note of grief is still more poignant. In their death Hali mourns not a personal but an irretrievable national loss.

## VI.

The social note is strong in "Munājāt-i-Bewa", "Chup ki Dād" and "Huqūq-i-Aulād". A very conspicuous side of the Indian Renaissance is the triumph of the Christian sentiment visible in the form of interest in the humble and the downtrodden. Perhaps, no one suffered more in the age of ignorance and masculine domination than woman. Ground down by social and religious tyranny to the position of household chattel or a plaything for her master, there is nothing that emerges from the darkness of the Middle Ages so truly pathetic and tragic as that supreme martyr-Woman. It is of a piece with Hali's deep sympathy that he should choose her for the sacrament of his verse. With their solemn cadences like the Funeral March of Chopin\_a thing for which Hali had intuitive gift\_all the three poems are profoundly moving. The pathos of Hali is neither

sentimental nor romantic. It has the austere note of Wordsworth and wells out of the depth of his heart.

## VII.

The remaining poems of Hali can be taken up together. They are mostly devoid of poetical feeling. Such are "Nishāt-i-Ummīd" "Hubb-i-Watan" and "Nang-i-Khidmat". They are prose compositions masquerading as verse and for that reason incredibly dull. In "Nang-i-Khidmat" his indignation against the slavish mentality of his countrymen boils to the point of frenzy and his diction rises up equal to the occasion in some of the stanzas. The other poems like "Tāssub wa Insāf" or "Phūt aur Eke kā Munāzira"<sup>1</sup> are entirely intellectual in their contents. /like Pope's Essay on Man make good reading by virtue of their excellent versification. Hali is like Dryden a master of argument in verse. He is a born tamer of rhymes that great impediment in Urdu verse over which the greatest have stumbled. The best of these ratiocinative poems is "Wa'iz wa Shā'ir" although "Rahm-o-Insāf" would appeal to some quite as much if not more. The poem gives Hali a chance to turn tables on his old foe the hypocritical preacher whom he has perfectly hit off with a few sure strokes. The end is almost humorous.

## VIII.

Hali essayed the ghazal both before and after his reform and has left us quite a voluminous body of literature, but he

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I. These are "Strife Poems", called "Munāzira", and were first introduced by Asadi Tusī in Persian. Hali introduced them in Urdu but none has followed his example. Akbar Munīr's "Daryā wa Sahil" is the only other "munāzira" poem I have come across in Urdu.

does not excel in it. It suffers from self-consciousness. Probably he is too much trammelled by his cult of simplicity to experience self-abandonment to the emotion of the moment. His critical conscience was always over-exacting, and in his scrupulous adhesion to his theory he often overshot the mark and landed in the trivial. Hali has divided his ghazals in two departments, the old and the new, to enable the readers to appreciate the change in the outlook but the contrast is not very piquant and if the difference between the old and the new had been what we find in Hali's ghazals, it was not worth the long crusade he waged against the old school, its artificialities and exaggeration. The real fact is that Hali was either temperamentally sober and simple and even in his unregenerate days fought shy of the excesses of the old school; or what is more probable he excised whatever smacked of the old in his later iconoclastic fervour. The latter inference seems nearer the truth and is borne out by Hali's excessive remorse on his waste of energies in the unheeding period of his youth so well expressed in the foreword to the "Musaddas". Whatever the fact, the old ghazals of Hali are not so strongly vitiated by the besetting sins of the old school and are in my opinion on a par with later work. These new ones excel in a greater simplicity of diction and a more scrupulous envisagement of his emotions and by the broadening of the sphere of the ghazal by continuous treatment of themes social, political, religious and by an occasional discarding of the "radif" with a view to attain a close approximation to the thought expressed. They were also

written at a time when youth was over with the poet and therefore the erotic note is mild. The older ghazals on the contrary though quite simple in diction are not without occasional felicity which one searches in vain in the new ones and are more acquiver with passion. Into them Hali has poured something of the heady wine of his youth and they are closer to the heart of a youngman. Students of Hali's poetry will have their own favourites. I quote two of the best one from each class:-

جیسے پہنا ہے کچھ اپنی زبان میں	کوئی محرم نہیں تھا جہاں میں	تیم
کہ دوڑا کوئی آئینا میں	خفس میں جی نہیں لٹکا کر	
دعوائیہ سے اشارت نہیں میں	کوئی نہ ہو لکڑی کی شادی میں	
لعل جانا میں اب کھاتی میں	بہیں انجمن آہنچا دانا	
بہت دست سے میری دانتاں میں	نیا ہے بچے جب نہم کرنا	
ان وقت میں کچھ کہ جہاں میں	دل پر درد سے کچھ ناموں	
ابھی کچھ اور باقی ہیں حال میں	بہت جی خوش موافق ہے حال میں	

جس پہ بوسے تلخ عم و باہ میں	اب وہ اہل ساقی تھا نہیں	جدید
تم کو چہ کے پر اتنا ہے نہیں	چہ زخم سے پر اتمام دونا	
زندگانی سے کچھ نہیں	رخیا باہر الیہ جانے	
فرد سے عم کو نہیں	نور نہیں لہر سے نہیں	

کوئی دوزخ ہو تو میری جا  
 سر کی دل کی واردا ہے  
 ذرہ ذرہ سے بھر دوں  
 جس سے آفتون فرار ہے  
 تیس جو لوگوں جو مباحی  
 مائی کچھ کی کوز ہے

## IX.

"Rubā'ī" was almost non-existent in Urdu before Hali. Anīs is the only poet who left any which can have a claim to literary merit but they are all gloomy and morbid. The terseness the point and the bite of "Rubā'ī" appealed to Hali and finding that it possessed a forcefulness that cannot be secured by any other form, he harnessed it to the purpose of awakening his community and conveying his message.

The "Rubā'īs" of Hali are not the crystallised outpourings of a great poetic intensity as "Lāla-e-Tūr" of Iqbāl or those appearing in "Bāl-i-Jibrīl". Nor is there anything of the mystical or philosophical about them as the readers of Khayyām or Abū Sa'īd Abul Khair might expect. Hali is a man of practical nature facing stern realities of life and therefore his utterances possess more the saving grace of the common sense of everyday life.

## X.

Characteristics.

1. The foremost quality of the verse of Hali is its sincerity. He looks into his mind and writes. His poetry is nothing but

the overflow of strong emotions. Technical skill, mastery of language, a sensitive ear to <sup>the</sup> music of language, imagination, all these have a relative position in poetry; the primary thing is a mind sensitive to outward impressions and things. There is no exaggeration or unreality in the poetry of Hali. He has only set down what he has felt. His "Apostrophe to Muse" is a confession of faith. Another well known poem of his "Mushaira par na likhne kā úzr"<sup>2</sup> emphasises the same aspect of his poetry.

This is nothing but a reaction against the classical age. Poetry was nothing but a reproduction of other people's ideas in beautiful form. "What oft was said but ne'er so well expressed" was not only the ideal of the Classical Age in England; it was also the universal practice in Urdu. Hali's protest against the old artificialities is not merely doctrinaire. It is the instinctive reaction of a mind dowered with fresh ideas against the hackneyed themes. The Classical poetry was artificial and unreal because it had nothing fresh to say. With dawn of the new age a thousand new ideas entered life. Life became a thrilling experience, instead of a sodden routine.

Hence the sincerity of Hali was not merely temperamental. Hali writes that he had a natural repugnance of exaggeration and unreality but by itself it would not have come to much. He would have been in the same position as his master Ghalib, a

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I. Vide supra.

2. Dīwān.p. I9. Op. Cit.

literary imprisoned in the classical jars. What fed his native impulse and turned it into a driving force was the new age into which his life was cast.

Whatever the case, Hali has a horror of insincerity; and like most reformers sometimes made a fetish of it.<sup>1</sup> Only the overwhelming fervour and naïveté of Hali could excuse such flourish.

It should be remembered that like most reformers Hali has very little of sense of humour.

For good or for bad poetry has undergone another change with Hali. He is a meliorist and insists on poetry being a criticism of life. The poet is a reformer and a moralist with the gift of musical utterance who should use it for the uplift of mankind. From the view-point of art this is a questionable asset and some of the most deplorable lapses of Hali are due to the intrusion of an extra-artistic motive. Historically, this as well as insistence on sincerity, are in reaction against the tone of poetry in the past. It would be incorrect to say that the Classical poetry is deliberately immoral. The poet before Hali was not Bohemian. The strict conservatism then prevalent was intolerant of eccentricity in behaviour and poets like the rest willingly subscribed to the conventional morality. Most of them were good men according to their light. The difference lay in the fact that they were not conscious of any social responsibility. The age was individualistic and the theories of social solidarity with which we are so conversant

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I. See "Qitā Murattāba 1309.A.H", Diwān: pp. 182-183. Op. Cit.

were then altogether unknown. Poetry was merely a pastime; and when all is said its general tone was unhealthy and vapid, and it did exert a debasing influence on the reader. Hali reacted against this and insisted that poetry should improve people by presenting the noble qualities of virtue, honesty, truthfulness, courage, etc, in an attractive form before them. Hali has therefore done a great service to poetry. He has raised it to one of the great constructive forces in life and, if a thing is judged by its results the poetry of Hali, however much we may cavil against it, exerted a tremendous influence for good on his contemporaries.

ii. Hali shared to the full the strong prejudice of his great contemporaries against erotic poetry and that is why love figures so little in his poetry.<sup>1</sup> "Love Locked Out" would be a very appropriate title for it. He was sensitive to his finger-tips like Shibli; but when his call came he deliberately turned his back on his old interests. The ideal life for Hali is a life of reason and not passion.

iii. A product of the Renaissance Hali is an optimist at heart. Unlike the people before him, he is not weighed down by thoughts of fate and destiny. He believes in action and strenuousness as

I. "Is love a physician for the unhealthy at heart?

Or is it in itself home for thousands of woes?

Of that I know nothing; only this much I have heard, I37

For those without work it is a charming pastime." Diwan. p./

Also see ghazal "Ai ishq tū ne aksar etc" pp.58-59 and "Jite ji maut ke tum munh men na janā hargiz", pp.87-89. (Diwan)

the great formative forces of life. Despite his morbidness he is sound at the core. All that sinister hierarch of fate, chance and destiny is said to control life he has dethroned. He has emerged from the cloud-banks of mediaeval superstition and sees things in the light of the new given reason. The upshot of his philosophy, if he has any philosophy is that character is destiny and that we make or mar our lives ourselves. The gloom that I have so often emphasised as the characteristic of his poetry is the necessary outcome of his excessive reforming zeal. It is the impatience of a reformer who wants to infect people with his own enthusiasm. In the second place he could not tear himself from the tragic memories of the disruption of the Islamic Empire in India. He is like Macduff in Macbeth:

Ross           Dispute it like a man.  
Macduff                                   I shall do so;  
                  But I must also feel it as a man.

Hali must feel it as a Musalman.

"I cannot but remember such things were,  
That were most precious to me."<sup>1</sup>

Otherwise Hali is hopeful. There is an entire absence of both the Mediaeval or Oriental attitude of melancholy-that of resignation- and the modern attitude which invaded Europe after the War and of which the dominant aspect is a weary, languid attitude of abandonment\_a sadness permeated through and through with dejection, often accompanied by indifference and unwillingness to enunciate. Hali, like his master Sir Sayyid, is the physician of a sick nation. He detects a cancer in

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I. Macbeth: Act IV. Sc. iii, lines 219-223.

religious and social life and directs his energies towards its eradication. "Musaddas" is a social purgative. It is not the "howl of despair" as the Wasteland of T.S.Eliot or a continuous frenzy of pain like Aldington's Eaten Heart. The keynote of Hali's philosophy is struck in the opening lines of the "Musaddas." "Adjust the means to the end and you are sure to succeed, summarises his simple creed. The "Musaddas" is not the cry of despair, but the first clear indication of life and hope. Through it an age dumb with sorrow became articulate. Despair is silent.

iv. Hali left the old poetical forms as he found them. He never made any technical experiment with verse as did, for example, his contemporary Ismā'īl. Hali's originality only lay in adding a new spirit to the old verse. His poetry is new wine in old bottles.

The only instance in which he took liberty with form was to keep the flow of inspiration unimpeded by lightening the verse of the weight of the double rhyme. Writing about it in the "Muqaddima" he says:

"The poet must always select such 'radīf' as harmonises with the 'qafiā' and both taken together should not be more than a few words. On the other hand 'radīf' should be gradually discarded and 'qafiā' alone should be considered sufficient. The 'qafia', again, should be such as may provide ten or twenty times the rhyming words actually required, otherwise thought have to be subordinated to the rhyme."<sup>1</sup>

The widening of the range of ghazal ascribed to him is no innovation of Hali. It is as old as Urdu poetry.

So conservative is Hali with regard to form that he does not

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I. "Muqaddima", published with Diwan, Matba Ansari, Delhi, 1893: p.176.

allow even the variation in the length of stanza in a poem in the interest of an imaginary symmetry.<sup>1</sup>

v. The literary revolution which Hali inaugurated was primarily concerned with subject-matter; it was nevertheless to react upon form also. The great question that confronted Hali here was the problem of poetic diction. The old poets freely used the tarnished vocabulary borrowed from Persia at the expense of beauty and expression. So tenacious was the hold of old vocabulary on the poetic mind that innovations however felicitous were frowned upon, a scrupulous adherence to the past and not beauty being the standard of excellence. Hali who had to express new consciousness was bound to reject this imitation of the old school. How could the teeming world of new ideas which confronted him be rendered in the limited and faded vocabulary of the erotic verse? Hence Hali while insisting as far as possible on keeping close to the spoken idiom also insisted that the poetic diction must be supplemented by freely incorporating learned words. Here, as will be clear to all readers of Hali, the poet is torn between two principles which are irreconcilable. He has a strong bias for simplicity of diction. Like Wordsworth before him he believes that there is no difference between the diction of prose and poetry. The difference between Wordsworth and Hali is of the motives.

Wordsworth discarded the diction of the Classical School because it was inelegant and inexpressive. He therefore falls

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I. See discussion of Tarkib Band in "Muqaddima", p. 193. Op. Cit.

upon everyday idiom. Hali also found the diction inherited from the old school inadequate to his requirements but he resorted to everyday idiom, not only because it was intrinsically more expressive but principally because he wanted to make poetry a more pervasive influence in life. He was against the learned language because it restricted its appeal to the learned classes. He found like Tolstoy that poetry on account of its difficult technique was becoming more and more the concern of the elite. He wanted to universalise poetry by making it more intelligible. Hali's advocacy of poetry, therefore, springs from his desire to bring poetry within the reach of the man in the street.

But face to face with this was the other consideration; and nothing shows Hali's sanity to great advantage than his surrender of his pet theory of diction.

Discussing Milton's dictum that great poetry is "simple, sensuous and passionate," he writes:

"In my opinion the criterion of simplicity in poetry is this the thought, however elevated and recondite, must never be obscure or oblique and the words, so far as possible, must approach everyday idiom. The more distant would be the construction of the verse from the ordinary speech, the more it would be regarded to be deviating from simplicity. Everyday speech and idiom does not mean the language of the common masses on the one hand or that of the scholars on the other. It only contemplates the words, idioms and expressions normally used by the masses and the elite. But such a strict definition of simplicity will not allow most people to express themselves. It is possible one may succeed in a lyrical ghazal or romance, as did Mir and Sauda and some of their contemporaries, but in Qasida even such great masters as Sauda and Zauq failed in attaining this ideal of simplicity. Mir Anis, though very particular about the polish and clarity of his expression, had to employ Persian and Arabic words in profusion in his modern 'marsias'. In fact he

made them a part of everyday speech. Particularly in these days when the general knowledge of the people is increasing and new thoughts are invading poetry (the use of Arabic and Persian words is inevitable) for Urdu-e-Mualla or everyday speech is not sufficiently rich to express them."<sup>1</sup>

Thus despite his predilection for the simple Hali is prepared to augment the existing vocabulary from Persian and Arabic.

In the second place, we do not, on the whole, find in the poetry of Hali that avalanche of the conventional poetic diction that offends us in the pages of his predecessors and which curiously enough has once more invaded Urdu poetry with Iqbal and his school.

There is a general misunderstanding with regard to the poetic diction. It is sometimes thought that poetic diction is entirely different from prose diction; that they are mutually exclusive. This is an entire misunderstanding due probably to the critics who naturally quote the most typical passages. The greater part of the diction of the much abused Classical School of Dryden and Pope consists of King's English and is in no way different from the language of Wordsworth. What Wordsworth tilted against was an extremely small percentage of stock-words and phrases which the School, afraid of calling things by their prosaic names, invented as poetic substitutes. Any Classical poem will give one a number of them, for example, swain, nymph, philomel, Phoebus, Cynthia, flood, etc; or when it degenerated it resorted to such coinages as "the shining leather that encases the limbs" for a shoe or "the crawling pest" for locust, etc, etc. The fabric in both the cases is the same; the Classicist here

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I. "Muqaddima", pp. 59-60. Op. Cit.

and there picked some flowers to make the language, as he thought, more poetical.

Wordsworth discarded this diction because it was ineffective and tawdry. Exactly the same was the case with the poetic diction in Urdu also. Hali has given in his "Muqaddima" a long list of these words affected by the poets.<sup>1</sup> They are, to use the words of Edward Thomas, "The Praetorian guard of words whose service every aspirant to the poetic purple must borrow." Hali has discarded these words and writes for the most part in the plain everyday idiom.

But when we exalt Hali at the expense of the present generation of poets for having winnowed the poetic diction of these fantastic excrescences we commit one mistake. We give him credit for what was a necessity with him. Hali knew very well that a man may rise to a new vision of life but he cannot as quickly create a form for it. He must perforce fall on the available material and make the best of it. Hali writes to this effect in the Preface of his Diwan:

when

"Readers should bear in mind that/the thoughts of a country, nation or an individual undergo a change, the mode of expression does not undergo a simultaneous change. The speed of the car does change but the wheel and the tyre remain there. Islam considerably changed the thoughts of 'Jāhiliyya' but there was not the slightest change in style or diction. The similes and metaphors that were previously employed in panegyrics, satires, ghazals, tashbibs, were now transferred to 'Tauhid', 'Munājāt', and ethical discourses. This is particularly more true in the case of poetry. It is possible the moderns may discard the thoughts of the ancients but they certainly cannot do without their diction. Just as a traveller to a new country feels impelled to learn to talk in the language of that country to know it and to be able to win over the hearts of its inhabitants similarly a poet with new thoughts must see that he does not go far from the style and diction of the ancients. So far as possible he must express his thoughts in a style which

1. Muqaddima. p. 77

is familiar to the ears of his public and should heartily thank the ancients for supplying him with a store of polished words, idioms, similes, metaphors, etc."1

But withal Hali is free from the conventional poetic diction. What is the reason?

It is a well known fact of the science of linguistics that in the growth and development of language the progress is from the known to the unknown. Unable to find the name for a certain thing or concept we express it in the terms of things closely allied to it. This points to the beginning of metaphors. Similar is the case with new consciousness. When the mystic element entered Persian poetry the poets made a symbolical use of the current erotic vocabulary. To the ears used to the erotic themes the new matter must have sounded dull if presented in a straight-forward manner as by Sanā'ī. Similarly poets like Iqbāl who think in terms of imagery use the old diction metaphorically to express their new emotions. Hali avoids the conventional poetic diction for the reason that his temperament is entirely different from that of Iqbāl. Hali is an average man lifted out of himself by his deep passions. Iqbāl has more poetic imagination and therefore he cannot break away from the old vocabulary. Emotions differ not only with regard to their intensity; they differ in their nature and form also, in colour and pictorial quality. Hali's emotions come to him in a russet garb and therefore he avoids the diction of his predecessors. His mind is that of a matter-of-fact man not that of a poet.

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I. Diwān-Preface: pp. 6-7; Op. Cit.

Paradoxical as it may sound, Hali's freedom from an excess of old diction is also due to another complimentary cause. All forms have more or less a diction peculiar to them which on account of constant association has become inseparable from them. Hali's freedom is to some extent due to the forms of verse he generally adopts. His reversion to the conventional phraseology in his ghazals is an instance in the case. Here are a few examples from his modern ghazals:

تقاضی زبان کو کیسے نہ تھا	پیش از کلمہ عشق کس نام نہ تھا
یعنی خزان سے پھر کی دل شادمانہ تھا	کیم و بہا میں کس پر متناہ نہ تھا
گر یا سہا سر پہ بھی آسمان نہ تھا	تھے ہی ان سے بھول گئیں فقیر تمام
تھی دل کی اقساط کب سے ہم جان نہ تھا	یہاں جاتے تو جائیہ جا رہے ہیں
تم جانا رہیں یہاں آ کر شہ جان نہ تھا	بہ مری با خودی کے تھا از زبان
بجہ او خود اپنی ذرا سے کے ایسا نہ تھا	ان دنوں سے ہے کھو کھو کر جو ہے
کھن رقیب دل پہ کمال گران نہ تھا	رونا ہے یہاں پہ ہوتے تھے دریا

تقاضی زبان کب سے اس دل سے جمع ہوئی  
 نامہ اس کے کہ تو ہی تیرا دشمن نہ تھا

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سے بہت سے دل میں ہیں دریا سے      کشتہ وہ سب سناٹے اندر ہیں سے  
 کیا کیا ہیں دل میں دیکھے ان پر ہے      ہم سبز باں ہیں جوڑی پہاں سے  
 حواں میں کھنڈے زویشہ اسید      اب بت ترم جہاں میں تبتناؤں سے  
 پر جھپٹی کی نہ بات کہیں یا کسی دفعوں      آنے ہی ہم سب ہوئے جتنے ان سے  
 دیر و حرم کو تیرے ناز کے بودیا      اپنے تیرا پیر ہی ہم جہاں سے  
 دارا و حرم کو تیرے لہڑوں پر شہر      نر خنڈا شش ایلی گراں سے

جانکی سے کل سا جوئے تم افسردہ دل بہت

اے سے دوسلوں اب کہ میں نہیں سے

دل مدعی و اب پہاں یا گیا اور      بات کہ ان گانے زور لہ ہم نیا اور  
 یا راز تیرے نام نہ محفل و جہاں      ہم گونا گور دکھا روں سے  
 یا کبھی لہڑی دیر کے زور و اول و عطا      یا اب پہل بعد نہم برضا سے  
 وصل ہوا سے جہاں ہی کجلی نہ پیکر      ڈوبتا ہم اب جعفر میں لہ نیم ہوا سے  
 دل کی جھنڈا ہو تو جھوٹا ہا رو سیاہ      تم مدعی دکن گرا لہ میں سے  
 دریا کو زہی جو دل کی نصیحتوں کے      کشتہ کل کا پار ہو یا دریا سے

جانکی د لہڑوں کا نہ حکم دہر ہو مد  
 چہرا زنتہ نہ دل میں یا گیا سے

## XI.

Having discussed the various features of Hali's poetry I pass on to the crucial question: Is Hali's mind essentially poetical? Is he a great poet?

I will begin by considering the subject-matter of Hali's poetry. Such a division of poetry into water-tight compartment as subject-matter and style, is highly misleading. It means that style is something superadded which it is not. But in the critical discussion, it is sometimes necessary to divide poetry into such arbitrary divisions as style and form for the sake of convenience.

The greater part by far the greater part of Hali's poetry is a social document. The first part of the "Musaddas" is a historical survey of the rise of Islam, the other half a scathing criticism of the degenerate Muslim society. The poem is thus descriptive and satiric. In addition to the "Musaddas," as already discussed, he has left a dozen or so of short satires dealing with the contemporary social and political problems and some miscellaneous pieces. Most of the other poems are purely argumentative, where the claims of two abstract qualities are compared and contrasted as in a debating society. "Hubb-i-Watan" with his historical and intellectual material ends in an exhortation. "Barkha Rut" is descriptive with a few gleams of genuine poetry. The other poems are homiletic or elegiac. I need not consider the pieces written on special occasions. They would on analysis be found to be intellectual like the rest. On the whole the entire poetry of Hali may be

characterised as descriptive; and from the nature of its contents didactic and satiric.

The question before us is this: Is a satirist or didactic poet essentially a poet? Is his cast of mind that of a poet or a prose-writer?

After explaining that the attitude of mind which expresses itself in a Comedy of Manner is one which demands prose, Middleton Murry writes:

"For reasons which are somewhat similar it seems to me that prose is the proper vehicle of satire. Here again the historical fact is that many of the most famous satires have been written in verse....Nevertheless, the metrical form no more makes the satire of Horace or Hudibras's poetry...The content is invariably prosaic, whatever the form may be... There is not much doubt that Juvenal was right in saying that the emotion of indignation is fundamental in the satirist; and there is no reason why this disturbance of the emotional being should not find expression in poetry. Indeed if poetry is...the natural expression of the more violent kinds of personal emotion, it is surely the natural vehicle of indignation....But personal indignation of this kind, though it is the basis of satire, does not suffice for the real satirical attitude. Satire is not a matter of personal resentment, but of impersonal condemnation...of society by reference to an ideal. Satire is, in short,...based on a method of contrast...He (satirist) has to keep (himself) cool, for his activity is predominantly intellectual. His ideal standard of reference was framed in accordance with his emotions, indeed, but the measurement of the aberration from it is an affair of unbiased calculation...his (satirist's) appeal is to the rational part of man; he is engaged in a demonstration, and his aim is to arrange the facts that his hearers, in spite of themselves, are driven to refer to his own ideal."<sup>1</sup>

I have quoted at length to bring out the difference between prose and poetry, and to show that the attitude of the satirist and the moralist (for whereas the former measures the difference from the ideal, the latter presents it) is that of a prose-

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I. Middleton Murry: "Problem of Style; Humphry and Milford, Oxford University Press, London, 1922; pp64-65.

writer not a poet. Prose is the language of exact thinking and description; poetry that of emotion. The former is judicial hence the subject-matter of Hali despite the fact that it is sometimes interpenetrated with emotion is essentially that of a prose-writer. His attitude is throughout judicial and critical. It is only here and there that he surrenders himself to his emotions. Hali is a very accurate thinker but not a great poet. [But this in no way affects the value of his contribution to Urdu poetry. "Every work of art is an act of faith," says Gilbert Cannan, "and the plunge downward is no meaner performance than the upward flight."]

In the "Muqaddima" Hali considers imagination as a sine qua non of poetry, and rightly so. The imagination has a manifold function in literature. In its simpler and more familiar form the function of imagination is to call up images, pictures of things seen or heard. This kind of imagination enables a poet to vividly recall the past as Wordsworth does in Daffodils. In the second place it conjures up things and events not to be found in nature, as Shakespeare's witches, elves and fairies. Third, when in order to intensify an image it calls up another in the form of a simile, metaphor or personification or as Hali himself defines, it is the faculty that seizes upon the data of past experience and chooses by some mysterious instinct what suits its purpose. Or lastly imagination as defined by Coleridge is a faculty that pierces past the outer husk of things to their in\_reality. This is the interpretive

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I. "Satire", p. 21. Op. Cit.

imagination so strong in Wordsworth.

Now of these various forms of imagination detailed above Hali does not possess much of any. The first, it is clear, will figure largely in description of things seen or heard or in a pictureque reconstruction of the past; and is therefore indispensable for all novelists, dramatists and descriptive poets. There are traces of this in "Barkhā Rut" but they are mere traces and no more. His pictures are too long-drawn out and lack the true touch of the poet to select the significant detail to finish the picture before the mind's eye. His is the catalogue method, which is not that of the poet, but the historian or the scientist. Of historical imagination he has very little. His picture of Arabia before and after the new dispensation though enthusiastic is colourless and pales before such a reconstruction of the past as the "Āb-i-Hayāt."

Of the second kind of imagination Hali has nothing whatever. His is a matter-of-fact mind repelled by the extraordinary and the supernatural.

The most important of these kinds of imagination is the third found in the utmost profusion in the great poets Shakespeare, Shelley, Hugo and others. The gift of imaginative co-relation is almost non-existence in Hali. In the whole length and breadth of his poetry there does not occur a single beautiful image. These images do not have an illustrative or logical purpose as in scientific discussion. They reveal the writer's synthetic imagination which can piece together the apparently heterogeneous material in the heights of his vision. Hali has some comparison

of a very prosaic character and as it is very plain, they have merely a logical value.

"Poetry," writes Leigh Hunt, "includes whatsoever of painting can be made visible to the mind's eye, and of whatsoever of music can be conveyed by sound and proportion without singing or instrumentation."<sup>1</sup> I have already shown that Hali is singularly poor in pictorial images which thrill the reader and bring home to him the feelings and emotions of the poet. What about the melody of Hali's verse, that is his metrical music? The "Musaddas" has incontestable musical qualities of a sort. So are also his "Elegy on Ghālib", "Shikwa-e-Hind" and some portions of "Nang-i-Khidmat"; but even here where Hali is at his best one comes across such plodding lines as the following:

خرد اور ادراک رنجور ہیں وہیں  
 سرو و بادنی سے نزدیک کچھ دن  
 جہاں زار منسوب و مقید ہیں وہاں  
 بنیاد صحتی مجبور ہیں وہاں  
 نہ پریشانی سے رعبان و اجبار کا وہاں  
 نہ پروا ہے ابرار و احرار کا وہاں  
 ادھر عقیدتیں لطف کا اندھا ہوا  
 ادھر عقائد و جہالت کا بیڑا  
 ز غیبوں جا در میان قالیوں کو  
 نہ زردوں پتکائی زردانیوں میں

I. Leigh Hunt: An answer to the question "What is Poetry": edited by A. S. Cock; Boston, Gwin and Co., 1893; p.

Or such inartistic botches:

دکان دن کا ہے اور بیچارہ دن کا  
 پنج دن کا ہے اور بیچارہ دن کا  
 زمانہ میں بید ہے باہر دن کا  
 ہے بیرون میں بیچارہ دن کا  
 یہاں ایسا ہی کا ہے رب ایسی پر  
 ایسی کا آفس ایسی ایسی دفتر  
 سپروں اور اپنے اور بیچارے  
 جو بیسی کا بیرون کی بیسی  
 تو ہوں اور بیچارہ دن کا  
 تو ہوں اور بیسی بیچارہ بیسی  
 یہی جھینٹ اور بیچارہ بیسی  
 بلو اور بیسی بیسی اور بیسی

Or such thorny collocations of consonants as the following:

بہن ماہی کا لڑائی ایسی  
 بہن حصہ لکھوں کہ یہ لڑائی  
 بہت کہ تو بید ہے زیر و این  
 جھے اے لڑوں میں لڑ لڑ  
 زجر اور کرمت و لڑ لڑ  
 لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ  
 بہن لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ  
 لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ  
 لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ لڑ

آرشیدان کے گارمگورنارادہ  
 آرشیدان کے گارمگورنارادہ  
 ہے ایسے ہی کے استفادہ  
 ہے ایسے ہی کے استفادہ  
 ہے ایسے ہی کے استفادہ  
 ہے ایسے ہی کے استفادہ

The greater part of Hali's poetry is full of harsh and discordant notes, and it argues a very unmusical ear in him, not to have noticed this. On the whole Hali's verse is poor in sound.

Nor is Hali master of the musical and pictorial qualities of words. The poet uses the words not to convey his thoughts but to suggest his emotions. And here the musical quality of the words selected and their poetic association play an important role. Of course it is true that the poet can subdue the most reclariterant material to his purpose and induce it to suggest the beauty in his mind; but there are certain words that refuse to submit to the scheme of the poet. Hali is careless of his verbal music. This natural defect in him is very much intensified by his advocacy of the spoken language. The following lines are ruined by the unpoetical and discordant words:

دینا زخرا سے بیخ اٹھ تو مادل  
 آرشیدان کے گارمگورنارادہ

ع مجاہد میں جس کی بھرتی ہوئے نہ تو

ع جازب حکمت و تقاضا میں لیں ان کی راہ میں صاف نہ ہونے سے

ع دیکھا صاف دنیا و مافیہا حضرت زبیر - عریضہ شاد و کھنڈر بحال ان کی

ع صد دن کے بعد شام صبح نماز -

ع ریشتر سے اس کا نقش میں عدالت نامی نامی -

ع دن رات در دل مقبض رہنے سے ہیں

ع اس کی یاد آگے کی اجوار سے کمال

ع اس کی رعب و فضا رو باہر سے ہرگز ہرگز

ع اگر کجبت سے اس سے ہرگز نہیں

ع خود کہ بلکہ دوزخ میں اس کے ہرگز

ع اس کا غالب کجبت پر وہ اس سے ہرگز

ع ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز

ع کچھ ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز

ع ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز ہرگز

معمولی ہوئی ہیں اور ان پر وہی چڑھی ہے۔ جان لہو ہر سو وہی لہو ہے جن میں

۱۔ یہ جس کی ہیں جو بننے سے ہیں

۲۔ یہ یعنی یہ ایسی ہے جس میں یہ قرآنی

۳۔ کہ فتوح کی دسوا لہو ہے باہر کی ہیں

۴۔ یہ سب وہی ہے یہ اس کے دور میں

The following by his preference of the spoken idiom:

۱۔ کبے جاہل میں نام لہو دا

۲۔ یہ سنو تو یہ لہو کیوں لہو لہو

۳۔ یہ لہو کیوں لہو لہو

۴۔ قوم جب اتنا حق لہو لہو

۵۔ لہو لہو لہو لہو لہو

۶۔ قوم لہو لہو لہو لہو

۷۔ لہو لہو لہو لہو لہو

۸۔ لہو لہو لہو لہو لہو

۹۔ لہو لہو لہو لہو لہو

۱۰۔ لہو لہو لہو لہو لہو

ایکہ دنوں میں سب سے پہلے ڈالو  
 بیٹ میں جو ہر ایک میں ڈالو  
 نزار کی اور کتب میں اب  
 قوم کے پورے پورے کوئی نہ ہوا - تہذیب  
 علم و ادب میں دیکھ کر ہمیشہ  
 کوساں آوازوں و دہلے کا پورا  
 سب سے خالی و احمق نہ ہم  
 ہم پر نہ آئے نہ لکھنا  
 جب چھوڑ کر اسے ڈالو اس بات پر ہم  
 مال نہیں نظر آتا چھوڑا جاتا  
 ۱۔ رب نہ نیک ڈالو اسے اسے ڈالو کان میں  
 ۲۔ فقیر و شیخ میں جوئی و معنی جاتا  
 ۳۔ بات سبھی کی اور ان کی اور ان کی  
 ۴۔ کتب و فنون کی کوئی اور دودھ کا اور اہل  
 ۵۔ سو کئی کی اور اسے ڈالو اسے ڈالو  
 دین

To conclude: Hali's mind is not that of a poet. He has produced a considerable body of poetry that is generally in the poetic vein, but his attitude, except for a few moments, is critical. The poetry of Hali is the poetry of a prose-writer who has selected the form of poetry to express himself. Hali's distinguishing feature as a writer is his imperturbable commonsense, a high quality but not fitted to produce a great or even good second rate poetry. But we must not grumble if the foundation stone of our literary edifice is not the cupola.

## Chapter

## V.

## The Critic.

## I.

Both by intrinsic quality and permanent value the prose of Hali should rank above his poetry. This would have been put down as a view of a lunatic a decade since, like the Arnoldian paradox that the prose of Shelley would outlive his poetry. But though time has falsified Arnold's verdict, Hali's prose stands a fair chance of surviving his poetry. The traditional view of the comparative value of the prose and poetry of Hali has been expressed by Shaikh (now Sir) Ábdul Qādir in "The New School of Urdu Literature". He waxes eloquent on the poetry of Hali and gives his prose short shrift in the usual tone of a quarter century ago. This is the typical view. Hali is the greatest poet par excellence but his prose is pedestrian. The great idol of Sir Ábdul Qādir's generation in prose was Āzād and Hali was considered no match for him. Of course all this has got to change and there is more than a straw to show which way the wind is blowing.

To account for the obliquity of the view of Hali's contemporaries is worth an attempt. The question is by no means difficult to answer. In the first place, probably because prose even the best literary prose except when it tells a story and then it gets the better of poetry as the incredible sale records of best-sellers show has not the slightest chance in competing with poetry in the bid for popular favour. Hali's appeal was still more limited by the nature of his prose. Poetry is the

the general favourite; but critical prose could at best appeal to few. Hali the proseman had yet to find his audience. It is coming to his way now after about half a century. That Hali's poetry overshadowed his prose will be clearer still if we knew the relative position of prose and poetry in India in his time and the meaning attached to style. For centuries in India poetry was considered the highest art; prose was either non-existent, or if it existed at all, had the status of a camp-follower or a poor relative. And when a writer is considered, rightly or wrongly, to have risen to the top of his profession in the highest art, people will not very much care to take stock of what they considered to be a subsidiary activity. This may appear as rather fanciful at first but the whole history of literature bears it out. Wherever a writer has done unusually well both in prose and poetry, the latter has usually overshadowed the former. To the average reader Milton is a poet who wrote the Paradise Lost and not Areopagitica also. Dryden is a poet and not one of the foremost writers of prose and criticism. And the Romantic writers, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, has not their poetical genius eclipsed their prose? It is only here and there, as in Coleridge, that criticism holds the balance given between poetry and prose. In criticism Hali was much ahead of his time. The literary world was governed, as it is still governed except in the best quarters, by the old dogmatic principles of criticism which were more concerned with language and grammar than the study of the mind of the artist. The ancients still enjoyed something of the reverence of the

Classical writers of Greece and Rome in the Middle Ages. Hence when Hali delivered his assault on the old school, especially on the school of Lucknow, he did so at his own cost. The Oudh Punch, true to its classical traditions, and still more nettled by the attack on Lucknow, was unsparing in the bludgeon and did much <sup>to</sup> harm Hali's reputation as a prose writer. India is a land of impenetrable conservatism; and the outsider who is left agog by this period of her change, persuaded, probably, by the blatant press or the over-nervous, panic-mongering Englishman, is very much deceived. India is still very much in the hands of the past. It is only in the Panjab and the Deccan (Hyderabad) unburdened with the weight of literary tradition that modern literature and criticism have made any headway. The classical tradition is still very strong in the United Provinces; it has a large following and books like "Hamārī Shā'irī" (Our Poets) by Razvī, are by no means the last shot which the foe is suddenly firing in the long struggle between the old and the new.

## II.

The prose of Hali is mainly critical. It comprises four books: the "Muqaddima"; the Life of Sādī; "Yādgār-i-Ghālib" (the Critical and Biographical survey of the Life and Writings of Ghālib); and "Hayāt-i-Jāwīd" (the Life of Sir Sayyid).<sup>1</sup>

I shall discuss in this part the "Muqaddima" only, reserving for a separate discussion the biographical works.

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I. "Tiryāq-i-Masmūm" and "Majālis-un-Nisā" are the two other important works in prose, already considered in Chapter III.

The "Muqaddima" is one of the most challenging books of the second half of the Nineteenth century. In it Urdu criticism in one big stride comes in line with European criticism. Hali has his limitations. His grasp of critical principles is not very sound; one wishes he had been less sketchy on some important points. Sometimes the reader is suspiciously conscious of undigested matter borrowed from English. But all these shortcomings notwithstanding, it is still the best book on the subject in Urdu. Nor are Hali's extensive borrowings of the nature of plagiarism. He starts with certain definite principles and quotes to illustrate, confirm and amplify. Hali has many excellencies but paramount above the rest is his sanity, his imperturbable commonsense which presides over the book and imparts unity to it.

The "Muqaddima" is divided into three parts. The first deals with the general principles of criticism; the second is the historical survey of the decadence of Persian and Urdu poetry; the third is devoted to a full discussion of the nature of some well known forms of Urdu poetry, how they have been misused in the past and how they could be improved to express modern sentiments and themes.

The "Muqaddima" is of the nature of a defence of poetry. Admitting for the nonce what Plato and others have to say against poetry, Hali contends that poetry is one of the strongest social forces, and should therefore play no inconsiderable part in the growth and development of the community. There is a short discussion on that well known bogey of the last century, conjured up by Macaulay and Hazlitt that as civilisation advances, poetry

almost necessarily declines. Hali weighs the evidence pro and con and comes to the conclusion\_not without a secret misgiving to the contrary\_that the advancement of knowledge cannot limit the range of imagination. He ascribes the degeneration of poetry in the East to its despotic government. It encourages flattery and falsehood so that poetry steadily declines and ultimately becomes conventional and unnatural. This is one of the strongest discussions in the book and an equally able discussion centres in the repercussions of literature and society on each other. Hali is of opinion that metre and rhyme are not indispensable to poetry, the latter enhances the beauty of verse. He also rejects the other impediment of poetry so dear to the ancients, such as the double rhymes, the difficult rhymes and the entire paraphernalia of rhetorical devices discussed by Prof. E. J. W. in the first volume of his "History of Ottoman Poetry". Hali relegates form as understood by the ancients and considers emotions as the be-all and end-all of poetry. Hence the Tolstoyan fervour for sincerity.

The speculative part of the book deals with supernaturalism in poetry; poetry and morality; nature and function of imagination; function of poetry; and poetic diction.

### III.

The most notable contribution of Hali to Urdu ~~criticism~~ criticism is <sup>his</sup> the theory of the subordination of poetry to morality or instruction. For Hali the poet is inferior to the moralist or preacher; and poetry is good according as it lends itself more and more to instruction. He has left no long

← discussion on the subject but his numerous obiter dicta leave one in doubt as to his views:

A! Poetry not only stirs up our passions and feelings, it also enlivens our spiritual pleasures. The relations between our morals and our pure spiritual pleasures is so manifest that it need not be discussed. Although poetry does not teach or directly, as does ethics, to do it justice, it can be regarded as the representative of ethics. It is because of this that a very eminent branch of Sufi mystics believe music, of which poetry is the main and most important element to be the means of purifying our mind and soul, purging our passions and thus attaining unison with God."p.15

B"....But in spite of this the poet cannot be given the status of a preacher or a moralist. The moralist aims at direct inculcation and guidance whereas the poet's chief object is the unraveling of the human mind. He is influenced by the events of the time and simply expresses his emotional experiences. He does not cry out to teach others; he sees something and cries out involuntarily."Preface to Diwan.p.11

C."On the other hand the narrative poems of the civilised countries offer, in most cases, something original and new. The stories, no doubt, are fictional but all the accidents and events mentioned therein are such as are daily experienced by the people. And then they deduce such social, political and moral lessons out of them as exert a very wholesome influence on the culture and social life of the nation." p.81.

D."It is possible some may think that moral themes lack the fire and intensity of the erotic. It cannot be denied that moral preaching cannot have the effect of poems depicting love, the yearnings of desire, the pangs of separation, the pining for the beloved and the bitterness of jealousy. No doubt it is very difficult to effectively poetise moral and ethical subjects...but our contemporaries have such a vast material full of pathos and poignancy that it cannot be exhausted in centuries. The world has undergone and is undergoing a great change. Today the world is like a tree of which the old branches are falling off and new tendrils are shooting forth. Strong and tall trees are sucking up all the vitality of the earth and the small plants in their vicinity are fast drying up. Old nations are vacating the place and the new ones are coming in. And it is no ordinary flood of a Ganges or a Jumna which will recede after washing away a couple of villages. It is the mighty flood of an ocean which seems to be fast covering the face of the whole globe. The seeing eye and the knowing mind can find around him from morning till evening hundreds of touching scenes from which one can take lessons and the description of whose details can take the whole life of a poet."pp.130-131.

I have quoted at length because to some critics this view of poetry as the hand-maid to morality appears an ignominious surrender of the great function of poetry, namely, to please.

Mr. Bhopāl Singh in his article "Hali-His Criticism." writes:

"In European criticism today there are two theories about the effect of poetry. According to the first the object of poetry, like other fine arts, is the creation of beauty. According to the other it is the development of morals. But it is important to note that the great champions of the moral theory in art do not claim for poetry those benefits which Hali does in the dramas of Shakespeare. If Shakespeare were to know that his works were being studied because of the political, social and moral advantages accruing out of them he would jump up from the sleep of death. Like the beautiful objects of nature the masterpieces of fine arts also have a deep and lasting effect but the artists never preach directly. And if they begin to preach the beauty and charm of poetry vanish away. The views of Hali about the effect of poetry are based on this fundamental misconception of the function of art. It is impossible for most Indians to be above moral considerations when discussing a beautiful object. They never study their feelings. They seldom realise why they praise a particular beautiful object."

A little further he adds:

"It is fortunate that poets seldom remember their theories, otherwise they would soon drown themselves in the river of preaching and philosophy instead of giving us poetry. It can be said about the effect of poetry that it is neither moral nor philosophic. It has a peculiar beauty of its own and if poets ever inculcate morals they do it unconsciously."<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible not to concede a fair amount of truth to the critic. The tendency of modern thought is more and more in the direction of poetry for poetry's sake. But the problem is by no means so easy as the critic makes out. The end of poetry like art is the disclosure of beauty no doubt; but there has never been nor is there any possibility of there ever being

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1. "Adabī Dunyā", Lahore, March 1930, pp. 166-167.

any general agreement on this point.<sup>1</sup>

There are two lines of approach to the problem: a reference to the history of criticism and a discussion of the aesthetics of the problem. What has been the practice of the poets or the opinion of the critics. This is one way. The other is to discuss it as a speculative problem and to see how the intrusion of extra-artistic considerations affect poetry.

With regard to the history of criticism there is ample evidence that the alliance between poetry and morality has been the rule and not the exception. To this effect Tolstoy writes as follows:

"A really artistic production cannot be made to order, for a true work of art is the revelation (by laws beyond our grasp) of a new conception of life arising in the artist's soul, which when expressed, lights up the path along which humanity progresses."<sup>2</sup>

Tolstoy is a critic whom we should approach with caution. His obsession for morality is almost fanatical. But on this point there is almost a universal agreement between the critics. Scott-James in his "Making of Literature" writes that the main problem of criticism had been enunciated before the Golden Age of Greek literature had come to an end and refers to the controversy between Aeschylus and Euripides—a Modernist among poets who did not hesitate to question the current conventional views of society and religion—confirm the "accepted Greek view

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1. "Is it poetry's business to teach?" asks John Livingston Lowes, and answers: "There is perhaps no single interrogation which sets so swiftly the storm signal flying. And there is probably no answer which will command universal assent." *Convention and Revolt in Poetry*, p. 324; *Op. Cit.*

2. Count Leo Tolstoy: "Essays on *What is Art*", p. 61; *World Classics*.

that the function of the poet is to teach, to make men better, to produce more patriotic citizens." And when Aeschylus asks him the leading question: "On what ground should a poet claim admiration? Euripides is made to reply...

If his art is true, and his counsel sound; and if he brings  
help to the nation,  
By making men better in some respect."<sup>1</sup>

Among the Greek philosophers Plato is interested in literature or art only in so far as its influence is beneficial in moulding the life of the good citizen. It is true that in the view of Aristotle, the greatest critical voice of Greece, poetry is an imitation, that is, the imaginative reconstruction of life; but even he for once digresses into morals in his account of the Katharsis or the purging effect of tragedy.

In the Mediaeval Ages most of the great minds were adherents of the moral or as Richards would prefer to call it, the "ordinary value" theory of art and Horace, Dante, Spencer, and Milton, all were its exponents. As a matter of fact "few poets or artists had ever doubted that the value of art experiences was to be judged as other values are."<sup>2</sup>

Coming to the modern times Wordsworth, it is well known, wished to be considered as a teacher or nothing; and his friend Coleridge wrote in Biographia Literaria, no man was ever yet <sup>been</sup> a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher. This was also the view of Matthew Arnold when he wrote that

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I.R.A.Scott-James: "The Making of Literature", Martin Secker, London, 1929. pp. 35-36.

2. "The Principles of Literary Criticism", p71. Op. Cit.

"the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life\_to the question 'How to live?'"

Even in our own times we find no dearth of critics who expect poetry to teach, improve and guide. James Russel Lowell Writes:

"If it be the delightful function of the poet to set our lives to music, perhaps he will be even more sure of our maturer gratitude if he do his part also as a moralist and philosopher to purify and enlighten; if he define and encourage our vacillating perceptions of duty; if he piece together our fragmentary apprehensions of our own life and of that larger life whose unconscious instruments we are, making of the jumbled bits of our dissected mop of experience a coherent chart."

On the other side of the Channel Ropin deems poetry to be agreeable only on account of its being useful and asserts that pleasure is only a means which it uses for the end of profit. With Brunetiere poetry is nothing but metaphysics made manifest through the imagination.

Of course it is possible to gather a fairly strong array of views in favour of poetry for poetry's sake, or it may be argued, as Richards points out, "that opposed to all these appeared a certain Einstein".<sup>1</sup> The point is that Hali is not alone in his subservience of poetry to instruction. There is a strong body of critical opinion to support him.

I must mention here that the critics of Hali, when they take him to task for his moral theory of art and impress upon us with Baudelaire that "Poetry...has no other end than itself; it can have no other," forget the very important fact that the  
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I."Principles of Literary Criticism",foot-note p.71, where he refutes this argument.

"Muqaddima" was written at a time when the theory of art for art sake had hardly crossed the Channel. It was Whistler who some 40 years ago first preached it as a protest against the excessive didacticism of Ruskin and who found in Rossetti, Swinburne, Pater and Oscar Wilde, talented followers to illustrate it in practice. Even of these Pater, the only art-critic in the group felt the extravagance of his over-statements and qualified them by adding that "great art finds its logical, its architectural place, in the great structure of human life."

Considered from the speculative point of view the doctrine of poetry for poetry's sake does not hold its own very long. Its case has been best put by Prof. Bradley in the following words:

"What does the formula 'poetry for poetry's sake' tell us? It says these things. First, this experience is an end in itself, is worth having on its own account, has an intrinsic value. Next, its poetic value is this intrinsic worth alone. The consideration of ulterior ends...tends to lower poetic value...because it tends to change the nature of poetry by taking it out of its own atmosphere. For its nature is to be a part, nor yet a copy, of the real world...but to be a world by itself, independent, complete, autonomous."<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine, it is clear from the above, is not only against the moral valuation of art, and against 'nature'—the imitation of external things—but insists that art must create independently of life, regarding them essentially incompatible. Here it is that it advocates "betray their lop-sidedness". Art is not something abstract, having no relation with life. The artists are not mere finished clods with no individuality and no soul.

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 I.A.C. Bradley: "Oxford Lectures on Poetry", Macmillan & Co, London, 1909; pp4-5.

"Moral considerations," says Scott-James, "cannot fail to enter life and character...Morality being one of the principal issues of life belongs to the very fibre and texture of all art." "The doctrine only offers a perfected technique. It ignores the fact that our world is undergoing a progressive change. New environments, new situations, new ideals, new fears and hopes are moulding and remoulding us continuously. Newer generations will find a different world from ours and will therefore face newer problems. Artists being more sensitive than others must be influenced by these and the expression of their thoughts and emotions must reflect their personality and therefore their morality. Art can never be un-moral. It must be either moral or immoral. The world of the poet is not some "starry-world" aloof and far-away, governed by some strange laws and differentiated by some "other-worldly peculiarities." His world and ours "are made up of experiences of exactly the same kind." It is in the mode of their activity that they differ.

The doctrine, further, forgets that all art is communicative. Granted that the artist has attained his object, namely, pleasure by the writing of the poem, we have yet to consider the reader whose object, in most cases, is life and not art. The doctrine requires a complete divorce between the interests of the artist and the reader. This is calamitous for art itself. The poet must find something common between his own soul and the soul of every other man to bring about a reconciliation between their antagonististic interests and this common factor, according to

Sir Henry Newbolt, cannot be anything but life.<sup>1</sup>

I personally believe that poetry is of the nature of a soliloquy, that it is self-expression pure and simple, and that it presupposes no audience. But in spite of this I maintain that the poet has to reflect his ideas in his poetry. He is not only an emotional being, he is also intellectual and it is but natural that his intellectual life colour his emotions. I am not for the subservience of art to morality but at the same time I cannot subscribe to the views of pure aestheticians. Art is neither for the sake of morality nor for the sake of art; it is for the sake of life, of which morality is one of the principal issues.

The important question here is: granted that some of the great poets are teachers; how do they teach? Do they sit down to instruct in cold blood? Do they teach directly or is their philosophy transformed into a thing of beauty by feeling and imagination. On this point no two opinions are possible.

Prof. Lowes discussing the Anglo-Saxon Tradition in his "Convention and Revolt in Poetry", writes:

"There is...a fantastic notion abroad these days that thought ...is not a thing of beauty, and therefore is taboo for poetry. Now I grant at once that poetry's first concern...is beauty. And pure ratiocination...whatever may be its austere and remote beauty...is not as such the stuff of poetry...But if thought, however penetrating or profound, takes body in beauty of imperishable form, even a poet may with impunity plead guilty to its exercise.

The poet, then, cannot think too deeply, if he thinks through the imagination, which gives to thought its wings. Without that, ideas are out of place in poetry. With it, no idea,

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1. Sir Henry John Newbolt: "A New Study of English Poetry", London, Constable and Co, Ltd., 1917; p. 10.

however freighted with pabulum for the brain, is alien or inimical to poetry. That means that when a poet thinks, he must think as a poet. If he thinks...as a partisan of any movement, or an adherent of any creed, he comes under Touchstone's anathema-he is damn'd, like an ill-roasted egg all on one side. He is versifying his e ideas, not impregnating thought with imaginative beauty."<sup>1</sup>

A poet then unless he has an axe to grind and then he is so much less the poet, does not obtrude his ideas on his readers. He never forgets that the prime object of art is at bottom only presentation and that his method is not analysis but embodiment, not the conscious application of ideas but the revelation of life. He teaches less by what he inculcates than by what he shows.

What is Hali's position as a critic with regard to instruction? Does poetry teach as all great poetry teaches, as Shakespeare teaches, Greek tragedy teaches, as an implicit criticism of life, that is, by saturating thought with emotion, or does it teach directly? The main trend of the criticism of Hali is clearly towards overteaching. The stray sentences to the contrary italicised in the quotations above given are the unassimilated bits of the critical dicta picked up in the study of Western writers.

For Hali the greatest man is the moralist. He judges poetry by ethical values. Hali would have rejected the Ancient Mariner without the critical log at the end:

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

and even Shakespeare would have appealed to him less than his adaptation by Cibber.

With regard to the superiority of the moralist over the poet on which Hali is never tired of expatiating I need not say much. They do not stand on the same plain and therefore it is hard to institute a comparison between them. But if the uncritical task was forced on me, I would say with Lord Morley that one great creative poet exerts a nobler, deeper and more permanent ethical influence than dozens of generations of professional teachers.

Perhaps it will be more to the point to know, why Hali over-stressed the moral element in literature. In the first place in desiderating the moral element in poetry Hali was restating a truth that had been for ages considered as the only function of art and poetry in the East. A very large part of Persian and Arabic poetry is didactic. With such examples before him as Sádī, Attār, Rūmī, Jāmī and others, Hali was preaching no revolutionary gospel when he subordinated poetry to morals. In the second place it was in strong reaction against the loose tone of the greater part of Classical Urdu verse. The leading lights of Islamic Renaissance were painfully conscious of the unhealthy influence of the erotic verse on morals, and in their reforming zeal they wanted to make literature the vehicle of morality.

#### IV.

The rejection of the supernatural as a motif in poetry is intimately connected with two well known theories of Hali. First that science is clogging the wheels of imagination. To the simple mind of a man in the Middle Ages there was nothing disturbing

about the supernatural or the miraculous. It was to him the very stuff of life. But for the scientific mind of a modern the supernatural has no attraction. He rejects it as impossible. Hali says:

"The yarns over which the old-fashioned people used to nod their big heads in delight will in the near future be regarded the mad ravings of the senseless."

And again writes:

"The second very important thing is that the story in the Masnavi should never deal in impossible or supernatural matters. Although it has become customary since ages, not only in Asia but in all the countries of the world, that such things are introduced in stories and fiction; and the powerfully influenced the minds of the people when the knowledge of man was limited. But now that knowledge has dealt a death-blow to their magic, they affect us no more. On the other hand they seem ridiculous and we laugh at them in contempt. Instead of being filled with wonder we begin to regard the poet a fool or a simpleton. The test of the greatness of the poet or the novelist today is the ease with which he deals with those by the help of knowledge and philosophy for which he previously used to invoke supernaturalism." Muqaddima.p.196.

Second, that supernaturalism has a deleterious influence on the human mind. Discussing how bad poetry reacts on society, he writes:

"People become less attached to actuality and truth. Strange incidents, supernatural stories, impossible thoughts attract them more and more. No longer can they induce themselves to hear the simple and true events of history. Fiction and false stories attract them more than the actual verities of life. Their minds become averse to history, geography, mathematics and science. Silently but surely, immorality begins to take roots in society." Muqaddima.p.26.

Now it is customary with critics of Hali to come forward with a long list of established masterpieces from the world of literature with the supernatural and they ask, has the progress of science any way dimmed their lustre?

I must admit that for once Hali raised a false alarm here. I say with Principal Shairp, "that there is no fear for poetry (from science) as long as human nature remains what it is" but at the same time Hali's views cannot be brushed aside as pure nonsense.

I wonder if man will ever grow too civilised for supernaturalism. Sophisticated as we are how often do the dim and suppressed instincts further mysteriously overshadow the mind like a summer cloud and confront us like a presence that would not be put by. Our actual life goes to sleep and

We hear like a three year's child,  
The Mariner has his will.

But the supernatural to be effective must have the illusion of reality. It must be passed as real or at least probable or possible. When it ceases to convince it ceases to interest. How many readers are touched by the paste-board horrors of the School of Terror with its ghosts, skeletons and devils? A very respectable body of critical opinion today endorses Hali's conclusion. H.D. Traill writes in his Life of Coleridge:

"In spite of his theory as to the twofold function of poetry we must finally judge that of Coleridge, as of any other poet, by its relation to the actual. Ancient Mariners and Christabels-the people, the scenery, and the incidents of an imaginary world-may be handled by poetry once and again to the wonder and delight of man; but feets of this kind cannot-or cannot in the Western world, at any rate-be repeated indefinitely, and the ultimate test of poetry, at least for the modern European reader, is its treatment of actualities-its relations to the world of human action, passion, sensation, thought."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly Mark Pattison discussing Paradise Lost says that the poem is losing interest because of its subject-matter. Hali

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I.H.D. Traill: "Life of Coleridge", Englishmen of Letters, 1834, Macmillan and Co, p.64.

was therefore not far wrong when he raised his voice against the supernatural. I entirely agree with Prof. Dowden when he says

"We slighter and smaller natures can deprive ourselves altogether of the sense for such phenomena; we can elevate ourselves into a rare atmosphere of intellectuality and incredulity. The wider and richer natures of creative artists have received too large an inheritance from the race and have too fully absorbed all the influences of their environment for this to be possible in their case. While di-  
recollections and forefeelings haunt their blood they cannot enclose themselves in a little pinfold of demonstrable knowledge and call it the universe."<sup>1</sup>

The supernatural will not have only interest for the wider and richer natures, but the smaller ones also whenever they are in a mood of escape from the dull tedium of life, but it must be master-mind to lift the latch to let one into the magic world.

I think the critics of Hali have been unfair to him in not considering the question with reference to his context and treating it as the speculative problem without keeping in view Hali's literary environments. Hali does not enter the list against the immortals, and it is unfair to drag them into the discussion to demolish Hali's views. Hali framed his views by reference to the literature available in Urdu and Persian, which is crude and childish. Even the story of Suhrāb and Rustā is sufficiently puerile in its supernaturalism. Who can then say that Hali judged wrong? He is generalising from the literature before him just as Aristotle generalised his views on drama from Greek tragedy. And if Hali's theories break down before European literature, the position is exactly that of Aristotle with reference to the Romantic dramas of Shakespeare.

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I. Edward Dowden: "A Critical Study of Mind and Art of Shakespeare"  
Henry S. King and Co., London, 1875; p. 249.

When Hali selected Milton's definition of poetry as simple, sensuous and passionate from a host of views, he evidently wanted to entrench himself behind a great name. Milton's view—at least as Hali interpreted it—was extremely comfortable for his own theories. The irony of it all that there are no two critics who fully agree in their interpretation of the dictum, never having occurred to him.<sup>1</sup>

I. Leigh Hunt says in "What is Poetry", that "by 'simple' he (Milton) means unperplexed, by 'sensuous', genial and full of imagery; by 'passionate' excited and enthusiastic." Op.Cit. Henry Charles Beeching writes to the following effect: "We may presume that by his first epithet Milton intended that simplicity which is another name for sincerity. He meant that a poet must look at the world frankly and with open eyes; with the spirit, though with more than the wisdom, of a child. We sometimes express another side of the same truth by saying that poetry is 'universal', meaning that it cares nothing for superficial and transient fashions, but is interested only 'in man, in nature, and in human life,' in their permanent elements...By sensuous it is probable that Milton meant what, in more technical language, we should describe as 'concrete'. Poetry deals with things, and it deals with people; it sings of birds and flowers and stars; it sings of the wrath of Achilles, the wanderings of Ulysses and Aeneas, the woes of King Oedipus, the problems of Brutus and Hamlet; whatever be the thought or emotion it is concerned with it is concerned with them as operating on a particular occasion it has no concern with the intellect or the emotions or the will in abstraction from this or that wise or passionate or wilful person. By his third epithet Milton...touched..the heart of the matter. We all conceive prose to be an adequate vehicle for our feelings, but as soon as we are deeply moved and wish to express our emotions we instinctively turn to the poets. Wordsworth is at one with Milton in fixing passion as of the essence of poetry, which he in one place defines as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.'" "Two Lectures introductory to the Study of Poetry", Cambridge University Press, 1901; pp.1-3-

W.P.Ker differs from both. He refers to the circumstances under which Milton used the three epithets with respect to poetry and says that he only wanted to bring home to his friend Mr. Samuel Hartlib the difference between rhetoric and poetry and did not attempt to give an absolute description of poetry. Discussing the three epithets he says that "Simple" means "Comprehensible" and is the opposite of "subtile". Arguing that when Milton uses Latin or foreign derivatives, he always thinks of the original

Hali takes 'simple' to refer to the simplicity of diction, as Mark Pattison does in his monograph on Milton. When it has reference to ideas, it means thoughts easily intelligible. 'Sensuous' was construed by an unusual freak of interpretation as real, as opposed to the unreal, exaggerated or the supernatural. And 'passionate' as full of strong and genuine sentiment. In his long campaign against the old school Hali had fought for sincerity, simplicity and reality, and therefore he readily snatched at this support from a great poet. But it was all illusion.

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 continued from the last page(foot-note):-  
 sense, he adds, "What is simple in poetry is the unity making the poem one thing, like the unity of a picture or a statue. ... "Sensuous" and "passionate" are closely connected with "simple", all being terms of quality in which poetry differs from the expatiating work of the orator....

"Sensuous" and "passionate" then are qualities that help, indeed make the unity, the simplicity, of a poem. "Sensuous" for Milton meant something like sense perception, immediate knowledge coming ~~frø~~ to the mind without reflection or calculation, striking direct on the mind in the same way as objects of sight or hearing. "Passionate" again depends on its etymological meaning which here is not a piece of Milton's pedantry, but ~~freely~~ fair common in the old language. "Passion" in our modern language means generally something active, the energy of the being thrown into some pursuit. But "passionate" here means something like "affecting." ... "Emotional" is nearer the meaning of Milton's "passionate," though the word is not so good. "Passionate" includes our common meaning of passion, but it is more general including everything of feeling, whether strong or weak."

"Form and Style in Poetry", by W.P.Ker, edited by R.W.Chambers, Macmillan and Co., Ltd, London, 1928; pp.175-184.

## VI.

In the long controversy for primacy between the subject-matter and treatment, inspiration and technical skill, Hali enlists himself on the side of inspiration and thereby shows the revolutionary bent of his mind. The leader of a new literary movement he supplies his age with a new set of literary values. The Classical poetry was decadent because it thought that it could dispense with inspiration by making up for it in technical skill. It had no fresh and individual apprehension of life. Poetic skill lay in versifying stereotyped things. It was against this emotional insincerity that Hali rebelled. Metrical skill Hali argued can no more make a poet than mere clothes a gentleman. In his revulsion against the dominant ideas of the preceding age which had made an apotheosis of merely technical skill Hali ruled that neither metre nor rhyme is indispensable for poetry. The first requisite for poetry is inspiration.

The question is : "Can poetry exist without metre?" It is an extremely ticklish question and the critical world is hopelessly divided over it. In the received sense we take poetry to mean literary composition in metrical form. But does that mean that every laborious rhymster without a spark of feeling is a poet? And contrariwise shall we deny the name of poetry to the Bible, the "Leaves of Grass" and the "Gitanjali" because of their form? Admitted the rhythm is the result of strong feelings; or as De Quincey puts it "rhythm is both a cause of impassioned feeling and a natural result of it," but nevertheless we have a growing body of literature which has the spirit of poetry

without having its authorised form; and which is considered by a large body of critics as poetry. Hali's fault, if any, lies in his careless language here. If we study the dictum in its proper perspective it no longer sounds so bizarre as some critics think.<sup>1</sup> Later on in his work Hali remarks that philosophy and not prose is the proper antithesis of poetry. What Hali is driving at is that inspiration is the proper basis of poetry and there can be a poetic prose although he does not use the actual word, as there is a prosaic poetry.

To conclude: by tilting against rhyme and metre Hali is simply emphasising the place of emotion in poetry. To the Classicist it is a more or less indispensable element. Hali considers it the very corner stone of poetry.

Although Hali reacting to the worship of form by the Classicists underestimates the metre and rhyme he is not for that reason disregardful of the place of technique in verse. A poet however strong his imagination and sensibility can never make his mark without careful observation and the mastery of the sense and sound of words. He writes:

"Having developed the habit of studying nature the next important matter is the study or investigation of those words with which the artist is to communicate his thoughts to the audience. This second study is also as important as the first one. The selection of the appropriate words, their proper arrangement so that the sense is clearly communicated to the addressee and the picture of the thought is vividly presented to the eye, and above all this to bestow upon this arrangement that hidden charm which may captivate the reader, is as important as it is necessary. If the verse lacks this it is much better not to write one. In doubt imagination plays much the same part in the arrangement of words as in the arrangement of thoughts but if the poet has not the full mastery of expression and does not patiently and assiduously investigate the words, mere

1. Bhopal Singh: Adabi Dunya, pp. 167-168. op. cit.

imagination will not do much." "Muqaddima".p.45.

Here Hali is in line with the exponents of Art for Art's sake. The difference between Hali and these is that Hali keeps the balance even between form and matter. This is well brought out in the discussion of Ibn-i-Khaldūn's dictum that "the perfection of literature, be it poetry or prose, lies only in words and not in subject-matter." He writes:

"We admit that poetry depends more on expression than on the subject-matter. Be it ever so exalted or refined the subject-matter cannot appeal to us if poorly expressed. On the other hand a commonplace thought expressed in beautiful words can elicit our admiration. But it does not seem quite correct to ignore the subject-matter on the presumption that everyone is already acquainted with it and that no study is needed for the acquirement of thought. If his thoughts are limited to those already expressed by others or he knows only the commonplace things which every man in the street knows, and he has not cared to study nature to provide material for his imagination, whatever his control of expression and mastery of language, he shall have to face one of the two difficulties: he shall either have to repeat again and again, with slight modifications here and there, the same thought already expressed by others or he shall have to devise new expressions and modes of style for every hackneyed and worn out thought whose popularity is doubtful and whose unpopularity is more likely." "Muqaddima".p.50

## VII.

On the historical side the greatness of Hali is universally admitted. He is the first critic to discuss the decadence of poetry in the East, enumerate its stages, and trace the influence of milieu especially the political institutions on the mind and art of the East. His unusually keen sense of the rapport between the environment and life and literature at once raises him to the top of Urdu critics. Here he has no compeer except Shibli whose "Shir-ul-Ajam" is one of the most monumental studies on the subject in Urdu literature. Both of them are the

founders of historical criticism in India, and considering their great disadvantages their achievements are remarkable. Speculative genius both of them have not; but in tracing the rise and degeneration of poetry in Persia and India and analysing the influence of events and institutions on them they have left us works which hold their own against similar works by the best of European critics.

The only limitation in the views and methods of Hali is that he is trying to make his theory explain too much. In literature as well as in society no one key would open all locks. In ascribing the decadence of Urdu poetry to despotism Hali has hit upon a true cause, but it is far from being the only cause. Despotism, it is true, makes for immobility and paralysis in general and anything like a progressive development in politics, religion and social usage is well-nigh impossible under it. Hali is right in attributing the sycophancy of the eulogists to the despotic government. But what about the erotic verse—a department of poetry which if not paying like panegyric bulks larger than it? Here the key refuses to fit the lock.

Hali explains the decadence of Urdu and Persian love poetry by reference to the imitation of the ancients. There came a stage in the decline of poetry when the poets having nothing fresh to say and yet trying to be original began either to exaggerate or use the figurative language of the ancients as a literal fact. This is Hali's account of the degeneration of the ghazal. I quote one of the numerous examples given by Hali:

"Those who first tried their hand on ghazal in Persian, on which Urdu poetry is based, must have attributed the

springing of love in human heart in quite a natural manner to the personal charms of the beloved, her graceful figure her captivating glances, her blandishments and so on. Those who followed them expressed the same figuratively in metaphorical language. To illustrate, glances, eyebrows, blandishments and coquetry were figuratively compared to a sword or a dagger and thus the novelty of expression might have rendered the thought more poetical. Those who came still later could not find a better figure or metaphor to express this thought and the craving for originality made them ignore the figurative nature of the sword and take it as a literal fact, giving it all the attributes of an actual sword one which has got a handle, blade, point, scabbard, is hung round the neck, wounds, cuts to pieces, beheads, bleeds, massacres; which can be blunt or sharp; which can tire out the user or which can fall from the hand of the murderer; whose victims can lodge a complaint in the court; for whom a "qisās" can be claimed; whose victim's relatives can claim blood-money. In short they began to prove the presence of all the conceivable attributes of an actual steel sword in it." "Muqaddima".p.96.

No doubt all this happened, but the theory as it stands fails to account for a great deal more in Urdu poetry. The insistence on the painful aspects of love, jealousy, the infidelity of the beloved, treachery and heartlessness, the triumphant promenade of the beloved chaperoned by the successful lover to the disappointment of a host of defeated rivals how will Hali's theory explain this? And all this in the society where the seclusion of women is universally observed.

All this Hali's theory fails to explain and this because in the face of strong facts he wishes to clear Urdu and Persian poetry from the stigma of pederastian love that came in the wake of the Turks in Persia, and from where the contagion spread all over the Muslim world. Shibli had dwelt at length on the point in his great work on Persian literature. In trying to clear Persian and Urdu poetry from the charge Hali is twisting a rope of sand. We need not consider his special

pleadings.<sup>1</sup> There is incontrovertible internal evidence in references to the sex of the beloved in poetry. They lift the discussion out of controversy and stamp it as a hard fact.

Hali's note on the artistic possibilities of the chief verse forms in Urdu and his suggestions for renovating them by adapting them to the new consciousness are full of commonsense. He jettisons the old conventional themes as well as the favourite stylistic graces, the rhetorical devices, the long and difficult rhymes in the ghazals. He insists on sincerity in the "qasīda" and widens its range by making it more democratic. In the Masnavi he pleads verisimilitude, consistency in characterisation and truthfulness in delineation\_virtues to the ancients generally paid no heed. All this may sound as commonplace to readers but the great triumphs of criticism are the sublimations of commonsense.

Hali has devoted much space to the discussion of ghazal and the means of improving it. He considers it the most important verse form which the poets would always resort to recall his fugitive impressions. Here for once Hali's clairvoyance has been at fault. The popularity of such a cramping and limited verse form as ghazal in the past was due to its vogue and principally to the absence of fresh and complex emotions. Everybody who has something to say will choose a medium that is adequate to his emotions. Hence in the present day world when most themes require ample space the poets are more and more

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I. See Hayāt-i-Sādī pp. 224-230 and also pp. 56-57 for Hali's defence of this aspect of Persian erotic verse.

resorting to other media. Hali's own poetry is an instance in the case. So is also the poetry of Iqbal and others. Ghazal of the old school is still lingering on, but with the change in the public taste it has lost its hold on the readers. It has no future before it.

Hali's greatest triumphs as well as his failures are traceable to the same source—his pre-eminently practical nature. His rejection of the supernatural is due to his strong dogged commonsense. So is also his preference of matter over form. To a practical mind there is nothing meritorious in the mere creation of beauty or the communication of the artistic pleasure in a bustling world like ours. Hence his insistence on instruction. Take any aspect of Hali's criticism you will find that it is traceable to his practical mind. It is a great limitation in a critic, but all that is great in him is due to it. Hali is not an exact or a deep thinker. In the speculative world he often trips. But give him a practical problem and you can always depend on him. The "Muqaddima" and other writings of Hali are strewn with brilliant aperçus which testify to his critical genius. I shall conclude this chapter by quoting some of them.

#### VIII.

This is how Hali defines originality in poetry:

"By new thoughts we never mean thoughts which have never occurred to anyone or which are above the approach of our intellect so that we can never divine them. We mean by them such thoughts as are constantly passing in the minds of the poets and non-poets and are always before them but which are so commonplace and worn out that they are brushed aside with contempt and are not considered worth the attention

paid to them; the domain of poetry is considered too refined for their tolerance. But in truth the secret of poetry lies in these very common thoughts which remain concealed from our common eyes because of their very extreme openness to our view.

As is evident, it is impossible for man to create something from mere nothing. His highest achievement is to give a new form to things already existent in the universe by a new arrangement of some of them. Just as a mason needs bricks, mud, lime etc, to erect a building or a carpenter wood and iron to make a piece of furniture, the poet too needs some such material already existent as bricks, mud, wood and iron, to make a verse. And what is this material? The daily events and experiences of the world which happen before our very eyes and which may relate to man, to such grand things as earth, sky, moon, sun, mountains; or such insignificant things as a mosquito, a spider or an insect. A poet who considers these things trivial and bases the structure of his verse on fictitious or impossible themes resembles a mason who does not consider bricks and mud in any way necessary for the erection of his building and wants such material which cannot raise up a building." "Preface to Diwān".p.8.

Here is another penetrating discussion on the influence of bad poetry on language:

"The greatest harm of the degeneration and provincialism of poetry is its devastating and baneful effect on literature and language. When falsehood and exaggeration become a matter of habit with the common poets, it inevitably has its effect on the writings of the scholars, the speech of the orators and the everyday conversation of the intelligentsia of the nation: for the words, idioms and expressions used by the poets are always deemed to be the best and the representative part of every language. Naturally if some one wants to acquire a distinction in a particular language as a writer or a speaker or a conversationalist, he has perforce to follow the language of the poets. In this way exaggeration enters into the very fibre and tissue of literature and language. The obscene writings of the poets introduce a number of low and vulgar words in the language for lexicons consider only those words to be authoritative which have been so certified by the use of the poets. In short, poetry of a nation has the same relation with its literature as the heart has with the body: if it is healthy the whole body is healthy. If it is diseased the whole body is diseased."

"Muqaddima".pp.26-27.

Here is another extract from his note on spontaneity and artificiality in poetry:

"There are many who think that a verse which spontaneously flows out from the mind or the pen of the poet has a greater aesthetic effect upon us than one which is the product of sustained thought and meditation..Some express it by the illustration that the juice which trickles out of the grape of itself is more delicious and fine than one which is pressed out of them. We are not prepared to accept the contention; To begin with the illustration itself disproves the contention; the juice which oozes out itself from the grapes on ripeness decidedly takes more time in its preparation than that squeezed out of the unripe or half-ripe grapes. Excepting rare cases, only that verse is more popular, more enjoyable, more sweet, more refined and cultured and more effective which is written after a great deal of thought has been bestowed upon it. It is possible that a poet may spontaneously utter forth in verse-form some refined and elevated thoughts already arranged and stored in his mind, for which some appropriate expression may strike him suddenly. But in the first instance such occasions are very rare and secondly, the thoughts which have been developing in his mind so long, like the grape-juice, cannot be said to have occurred suddenly without any forethought. A verse consists of two elements: thought and words. It is possible that a thought may strike the poet quite suddenly but it shall certainly take some time to clothe it in suitable words. It is possible that an architect may conceive of a grand and novel edifice but it is not possible that he should erect the building in the same period of time in which the design had flashed in his mind. To steer clear of the difficult rocks of metre and rhyme and successfully to select the appropriate words is not an easy task." "Muqaddima".p.47.

Hali's criticism of Ibn-i-Rashiq's advice that poets should learn by heart verses of great masters gives another brilliant discussion:

"Ibn-i-Rashiq has written this about Arabic language. Perhaps his advice may be useful so far as that language is concerned. Its poetry can boast a very long history. It presents in every age and in every section of the population since more than a thousand years, a galaxy of poets, one greater than the other. There resulted a vast immensity in the language. There were hundreds of modes of expressing a given thought, all of which had found their way into the literature. It is therefore possible to adopt the style of the ancients instead of creating a new one. But insistence upon imitation in a language like Urdu which is still in it

infancy, being hardly fifty or sixty years old, of which so far no dictionary has been prepared, which does not even offer a satisfactory grammar and whose notable authors can be counted on the fingers the imitation of the ancients in such a language would leave poetry in the cradle of her birth. It would be like the nest of the swallow which has not seen any change from the day of creation."

"Muqaddima" p.52.

Hali's note on the well known linguistic fact that loan words must conform to the phonetic peculiarities of the language into which they are borrowed, is full of commonsense. When some of our pedantic critics are still advocating return to the original pronunciation of loan words, Hali's unaided statement of the fact in the year 1893 was certainly remarkable:

"When the words of one language enter the other they never retain their original form (except in very few cases). Why then go far? In our own language there are thousands of Sanskrit, Prākṛit and Bhāshā words, but you will rarely find any one of them in the original form (here gives some instances). We are daily using these words because we do not know their origin and consider them to be quite correct. But since we happen to know Arabic and Persian, we sneer derisively on discerning any change in the pronunciation of the words borrowed from these languages, ~~in their changed form~~ although we use other words of the same languages in their changed form because we do not know their original form. (Here gives instances). The Persians are using thousands of Arabic words by pronouncing them incorrectly or giving them quite incorrect meanings. (gives instances). English has borrowed from all the languages of the world but has not retained anyone of them in the original form (gives instances).

The truth is that it is a mistake to regard loan words from Arabic, Persian and English and used in changed form in Urdu to be Arabic, Persian or English words any longer. They ought to be understood to be Urdu words."

"Muqaddima" pp. 109-110.

#### IX.

To sum up, Hali's critical views are in reaction against the dominant ideas of the preceding age. His critical talents were exercised for the purpose of emancipating poetry from the fetters of the old conventions. To the old forms he added nothing except making them slightly more elastic to express the new world of emotions which his world brought with it.

## Chapter

## VI.

## The Biographer.

## I.

Nowhere is the personality of Halli seen to greater advantage than in the persistent recurrence of certain well-defined ideas in all that he wrote. One may reasonably disagree with his utilitarian theories of the Fine Arts as with the pet theories of Carlyle or Ruskin; but his works stand out as the expression of a powerful one-sided mind. The challenging note with which the Life of Sādī opens, brings out the two salient features of his mind: his distrust of authority and his passion for reform:

"The practice of writing accounts of the lives of distinguished personages known in Greek as "Biography," and in Arabic as "Tazkira" or "Tarjuma," has been in vogue more or less from very ancient times. Although in the early times, accounts of the deeds of heroes and of mythological gods were mostly committed to memory and narrated by word of mouth on special occasions, the Jews were accustomed to keep written records of the lives of their ancestors. The Greeks and the Romans were the next to pay attention to this. So much so that the biographies written by the famous Roman Plutarch, who lived in the Second Century of the Christian era, are the best of the biographical accounts written in that age.

In the early Christian literature there are accounts of the lives of the saints, martyrs and reformers, which are to a certain extent complete in themselves. In the Middle Age the most trustworthy biographies are those attempted by the Muslims. But in either of the two periods the general practice was to rely on the tradition rather than on independent research, and indulge in exaggeration. The same tendency is also noticeable in the biographical accounts by Muslims. Only in the narration of the lives of those who have handed down the traditions of the Prophet, special care has been taken and the character of each his shortcomings as well as virtues described with a scrupulous regard to truth. For the rest, the biographies of theologians and poets are not so authentic. A biographical writing was based on hearsay, except when dealing with well-known historical personages, such as Caliphs, Sultans, ministers and military commanders, it was necessarily meagre. The life of not even

one of the most distinguished writers (of Islam) has been treated properly.

In modern times, particularly from the Seventeenth century, European historians have brought the art of biographical writing to a state of perfection. So much so, that, as in history, there has been evolved a philosophy of biography. In modern biographies historical and scientific accuracy is insisted upon, and inferences are drawn from established facts. The work of the writer is subjected to thorough examination and his virtues or defects clearly indicated. Often several bulky volumes are devoted to each writer."<sup>1</sup>

Instruction, the radiating centre of his critical theories, governs his biographies no less than his poetry. In the same Preface he writes:

"Biography is the ever-lasting memorial of those great men who spread virtue and goodness in the world and made noble and strenuous efforts to make it perfect. It is the record of those who left a worthy example for the coming generations to follow. Biography serves as a lashing whip to awaken the nations that slumber in lethargy and are plunged deep in the abyss of degeneration, after enjoying great cultural heights. When they read the accounts of their forbears and learn the great deeds they did, their dormant national pride is stirred up and the thought of regaining their lost glory finds a way in their hearts.

There are many who attained the highest ideals of humanity by simply reading the accounts of the lives of great men. It is stated that the secret of the reformatory zeal of Luther and the rise of Benjamin Franklin from a very humble position to the greatest of fame, lay in their study of biographical literature.

Biography, in a way, is more useful than ethics: ethics simply tells of the nature of evil and good; biography supplies us with the incentive to avoid evil and do good. It induces us to follow the footsteps of our great heroes and accomplish the same noble deeds which made them great. A famous English author writes: "Biography is shouting at the top of its voice, 'Go and do similar deeds.'"

No attention has so far been bestowed on biography in our country. In the common language of the country, namely Urdu we have only a few translations of the lives of some famous Europeans or the accounts of the lives of such persons as make no emotional appeal to us. I think we, both Hindus and Muslims, have notable and great figures in our ancestors whose great deeds and attainments can be the pride of us all. It is the duty of the present generation to publish ~~the~~ their glorious records to make them live in history and be I. Translation by Sayyid Muhammad Latif: "Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature.", Forster, Groom & Co., London, 1924 pp. 89-90.

the guiding light for the encouragement of the future generations." pp.4-6.

In subordinating history and biography to instruction Hali has raised another issue for endless controversy. One may not ~~may not~~ refuse a half-hearted assent to poetry as the criticism of life, even remembering that nine tenths of its lapses have been due to it. The moralist-poet is like the luckless Phaeton yoking together the horses of heaven and earth. He may rise to modest heights; but the mountain peaks of poetry are not his. And how often does he flounder in the wastelands and bogs of prose? But biography has never been, nor ever will be anything but the exhibition of life. One may approach life in a myriad ways: he may look upon it as a mass of happenings, or he may believe that through "all creation one increasing purpose runs"; he may believe like Carlyle in heroes and write his Heroes and Fredrick to substantiate his theory, or again in democracy like Macaulay and others. But these points of view are to be sharply distinguished from Hali's theory. As I have already said, it is quite open to one to draw moral sustenance from biography if he is so minded; and certain people are so made. They will find sermons in stones and books in running brooks and miss both the stone and the running brook. But the biographer is neither a school-master nor a teacher. Biography may be informative or critical. But its chief and real object is exhibition. Hali's view of the function of biography may be summed up in the well-known tag:

Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime;  
And departing leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.

The more important aspect of the problem is not the what but the why of his theory. Was it due to an innate didactic nature or some external influences? To me it seems to be the outcome of a different concept of values, conditioned by the traditional views, the prevailing notions peculiar to his age and the study of the Victorian examples.

Hali seems to have strongly felt that any work of art, if it is worth the name, awakens our desire to act, by arousing our emotions. This he felt to be more true in the case of biography in which the presence of the element of reality touches the responsive chord in the reader offering thereby a freer and wider scope for creative action.

Apart from this Hali was the child of his age—an age characterised by intense moral earnestness and reforming zeal. People needed guidance. It was a matter of common belief that lives of great men exercise moral influence on men and that there is an element in human nature which does not fail to recognise the nobility of mind in others, and instinctively, or because of the imitation-urge in it, aspires to the loftiness with which it comes in contact. Biography with the age of Hali therefore, was not an aesthetical but an ethical problem; not a "means of escape for the author as well as the reader" but a source of inspiration and guidance.

This conception of the function of biography was further reinforced by the Victorian examples and the character sketches of Plutarch of which Hali and his contemporaries had a very high opinion.

A study of the introductions of "Tazkiyat-ul-Kāmilīn"<sup>1</sup>, "Tazkiyat-ul-Mashāhīr",<sup>2</sup> "Tazkiyat-ul-Āqilīn"<sup>3</sup>, "Sarguzasht-i-Napoleon Bonaparte"<sup>4</sup>, "Akḥbār-i-Nahāt"<sup>5</sup> and "Al-Mamūn"<sup>6</sup> or "Al-Fārūq" by Qāzī Sirāj-ud-Dīn Aḥmad,<sup>7</sup> will show the reader how intensely they reflect the moral preoccupation of the age. The typical view is that of Muhammad Mushtāq Husain, the translator of "Napoleon and the French Revolution". He writes:

"There is no doubt that the translation of such a biography whose hero belongs to a very recent period of history, will be highly interesting, full of lessons, counsels and guidance. The original is for the Christians but I have translated it in such a way and have expressed the lessons in such words that it will prove useful for the believers of any and every faith and they will not entertain any dislike for the guidance it offers.

In its present form this book can be studied by any one, holding any position in life. Those who are employed in the military service can acquire courage, perseverance, fortitude and wisdom from it. Some of its portions are essentially suited to school children for they contain lessons by which they can follow the right path, lead a simple life, learn the value of time and develop self-respect. The political administrators can glean valuable experience from its pages. It has to tell a lot to women about truthfulness, love, fidelity and house-management. It has useful suggestions about the education of children and supplies a lot of information about matters which are harmful or beneficial for them. Most particularly it is clear from every passage of the book that to deprive children of religious education is nothing short of a deadly poison."<sup>8</sup>

Sir Sayyid who personified in himself all the phases of his age, writes in his introduction of Shibli's Al-Māmūn:

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1. "Eminent Men", by Prof. Ram Chandra, D.P.I., Patiala, published, Delhi, 1849.
  2. "Biographies of Great Men", IV. volumes, by Lālā Sadā Sukh, published 1854-56, at the instance of D.P.I., of United Provinces.
  3. "Biographies of Learned Men" by Atmore Sherring, Mirzapur Education Series, 1861.
  4. By Mushtāq Husain of Amroha with the assistance of Gulzarī Lal and Gangā Parshād, published 1871 by "Scientific Society, Aligarh".
  5. By Vakīl Aḥmad of Sikandarpur. Lives of Imāms and Eminent Men.
  7. Published 1892. The writer, later a Public Prosecutor, was then editor Sirmor Gazette, a very good Urdu Weekly.
  6. By Shibli, published 1889.
  8. See introduction.

"Unfortunate is the nation which forgets or does not know those exploits of its predecessors which deserve to be ever green in its memory. To remember the memorable deeds of our great men gives both good and bad fruit: if we ourselves are mere nothings, do not stir ourselves to do anything and merely brag of the great exploits of our ancestors, it means nothing but 'selling the bones' of our ancestors; but if we develop in ourselves the desire to emulate them, it is veritable elixer."

Qāzī Sirāj-ud-Dīn begins his "Al-Fārūq" with the sentence:

"You cannot find a better teacher than your own history."

Besides, the various missionary societies, particularly the Mirzapur Mission under M. Atmore Sherring and Ludhiana Mission under R. N. Cust, Aligarh Scientific Society, Rohilkhand Literary Society, Bareilly, and the various Provincial Education Departments particularly of the Panjab and North Western Province encouraged the study of biography and deliberately aimed at utilising it as a moral agent.

Hali could not be free from these influences. All the guidance that he had received from the Western literature went to augment his conviction that biography was a moral institution and had no other function. The Stracheys, Gosses and Faussetts were still far off. Even today an author of the eminence of André Maurois and there are no better artists in biography has to say:

"Biography is a type of literature which, more than any other, touches close upon morality...It arouses in us the feeling of greatness; by its display of the power of the individual it gives us confidence; there may be a danger in its always having an exciting, rather than a soothing, effect. At the same time, if it can show us, side by side with the tragic events of a life, the calm and oblivion which follow them; if it can show us, side by side with great ambitions, the vanity of their realisation, it may also bring peace to our souls...A biographer, such as Mr. Strache, who has the power to diffuse through his record of facts the poetic idea of Destiny, of the passage of Time, of the

fragility of human fortune, brings us in fact a secret comfort."<sup>1</sup>

We cannot, therefore, blame Hali if he finds a moral value in biography. His fault lies somewhere else. For whereas Mauroi while acknowledging the "moral effect" of biography hastens to warn the biographer that "for the full expression of this sublimated morality he must never consciously think about moral Hali subordinates biography to instruction and "consciously thinks about morals." He confines it to the exhibition of good for the guidance of mankind. He wishes to select people in the past or in his own time, who stand out for their goodness or greatness in certain departments of life and presents them for the emulation and guidance of mankind. With such a preconception of the value of biography Hali must naturally narrow down biography to the life of those alone who will serve as the models of virtue. He does not say this in so many words. But the inference is clear, and the ingenious way in which he makes out a case for Ghālib shows how deep-rooted was his conviction in the moral value of biography.

The life of Sayyid caused him no anxiety. He was his hero par excellence. But mark the plea his utilitarian conscience makes for his eligibility as a subject of biography:

"Although our nation can boast of great kings, diplomats, ministers and generals, the accounts of their lives cannot guide us in the arduous stage through which we and our coming generations have to pass. We are now to live as a subject race, and those qualities and attainments which are necessary for imperial and administrative purposes have become useless. There is no dearth of theologians, philosophers and authors in our forbears but they too cannot serve us as proper examples for our emulation. They were born at a time when it was said, 'the acquisition of knowledge is the business of

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I"Aspects of Biography", pp121 and 126-127

one set of people and cooking that of others.' In our times both these jobs are to be done by the same person. Their intellectual and cultural activities were not disturbed by any worry. They had no anxiety about their living. They served their nation and the Government served them. But we are not so fortunately situated. We are to look after our stomachs with the right hand and to think of doing something else by the left. The holy lives of our saints, too, have no relation whatsoever with the present state of us worldly people. They simply teach us to mind our own affairs but our good lies in the safety of all.

The deeds of our great ancestors, therefore, cannot directly give us any lesson except to be proud of their greatness and thus apply the saying to ourselves:

You are proud of your ancestors?

We admit they were great.

Only they left unworthy sons.

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We do ~~not~~ say that the lives of our noble ancestors are of absolutely no use to us. Their biographies contain all those guiding principles which are the chief constituents of national life, namely, diligence, love of honour, patience, perseverance, fortitude, pride, courage, forbearance and will-power. All this and more is to be seen in their lives. But our problems are absolutely different from those in which they utilised these weapons. Perhaps they had never to face the situation we are encountering. We are to conquer the hearts with the weapons with which they conquered countries. We are to attain under a foreign government the honour and respect they attained by serving their own government. In their times no one had any hand in public affairs and therefore they felt no need to struggle for the good of the country or the nation. But the situation has now undergone a complete change. In our times the life and the death of nations are in their own hands. They make or mar themselves. They may die or live; the government is simply to register the fact and dispose of them accordingly. When our conditions are so different, how can their lives throw light on our difficulties?...No doubt the lives of great men and even those of bad men of the past are not without their uses, but they do not point out to us any definite and clear path which we may take up with closed eyes and traverse our arduous journey.

The life of Sir Sayyid offers us an example by following which, it is possible, this difficult stage of our nation, which is also its last stage, may be traversed with ease."

"Hayāt-i-Jāwīd".pp.I-4

Sadi again causes him no qualms. He was long ago canonized by the fervent admiration of six centuries and Hali can brush

aside the imputation of pederastic love and that poor yarn about Somnāth. But in the life of Ghālib Hali is moved by two opposite impulses: his love for his master and his loyalty to his principles. The result is a flimsy and long-drawn out plea which is not without its humorous aspect.:

"The life of the Mirzā does not offer any great work or exploit except his poetry and literary activities. This very phase of his life, however, made it (his life) an event of first class importance in the last days of the Capital. In my opinion Persian poetry and prose came to an end with the death of Mirzā Ghālib. It occurred to me on several occasions, therefore, to collect the details of his life from all the reliable and available sources and write, as best as I could, a critical review of his works which were, in many cases, too difficult to be understood by his contemporaries. During the last few years that I was at Delhi, a movement in this direction, by some of his friends, made me think of it all the more. I borrowed the works of Mirzā from my friends and collected all the biographical material from the sources within my reach. I also wrote down all that I knew personally or had heard from my friends. I had not yet arranged the material when I had to give up the work for other and more pressing duties and these papers remained piled up with other papers for several years.

Now my friends once more approached me with persistent requests to take this work up and although I was very busy in an important affair, these repeated demands compelled me to take up Ghālib and postpone that important work.

I have already stated a little above that except his poetical and literary activities the life of Mirzā does not offer any event which may be conspicuous or praiseworthy. All the other incidents of his life which I have given in this book, therefore, should be considered superfluous and incidental. The real object of the book is to show to the readers his great poetical genius which appeared sometimes in his verse and prose, sometimes in his humour, sometimes in his love and care-free-ness, and sometimes in his mysticism and love for the family of Ali. If, therefore, there is any mention of any other thing besides these four, it should be considered extraneous." "Yādgār-i-Ghālib" pp-3-4

He again writes at the close of the book:

"I once more admit that this book cannot be counted amongst those which the country stands in need of at the present moment, and which can serve as a direct cure for the ailment

of the nation. I have been compelled to write this book by that blind and deaf goddess before whose ordinances and dominance expediency and commonsense do not avail.

I do not claim that this book has met any pressing need of the public nor do I assert that I have been actuated by public good to write it. But it is not necessary that a work which is done spontaneously on the dictates of one's inner yearnings and not under the counsel of discretion and wisdom does not, directly or indirectly, benefit any one. The wind that blows on its own impulse and the river which flows of its own impelling force, do not know where and why they are rushing on, but none can say that their effort are entirely useless. There is not an atom whose inner restlessness does not affect this vast universe and its system." "Yādgar-i-Ghālib".pp.420-421.

## II.

This brings us to another important problem in biography: the choice of subject. Must a writer confine himself to great men and, if so, what is the criterion of greatness? Shall we grudge greatness to a Ghālib, a Shelley and a Byron merely because we do not find "any great event in their lives except their art and personality"? Shall we extend it to an Alexander, a Chengiz Khān and a Napoleon just because they brought untold misery to millions by their lust for power and Empire? Or again is it the exclusive heritage of political or religious leaders

I have given the view of Hali at some length. It is typical of his age. In fact it was the only view which was ever held till the beginning of the present century. So late as 1896 Sir Sidney Lee could define the inspiration of biography as "an instinctive desire to do honour to the memories of those who, by character and exploits, have distinguished themselves from the mass of their countrymen."<sup>1</sup>

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I.Cornhill Magazine, March, 1896. It was originally delivered as a lecture.

This view, which is also the view of Hall, betrays an ignorance of the nature of biography which, rightly considered is an important branch of psychology. The biographer claims only to lay bare humanity to exhibit imposing nothing, proposing nothing. He leaves greatness to take care of itself, as always it will if humanity is preserved. These are the art and the mind of the biographer himself which preoccupy us and not the material used by him. His art, properly speaking, consists in the psychological study of the subject and the presentation of the facts in such a manner that the interest of the reader is continuously sustained.

It is evident from this that the life of every human being can be interesting. All depends on the artist. If, as André Maurois points out, he can analyse the inner working of the mind of a man like a Proust or a James Joyce, he can by such an analysis find greater richness and beauty in the life of an obscure beggar than in that of Caesar.<sup>1</sup> But there are very few artists who can do it, and considering the evident difficulty it can be laid down that a life to be a fit subject of biography must have a certain magnitude though it is in no way necessary that it must offer exciting adventures and public events. I cannot help quoting here a very illuminating passage from Marcel Schwob on the choice of subject in biography. He writes:

"Biographers, have supposed that only great men's lives could interest us. Art takes no account of such considerations. In the eyes of a painter the portrait of an unknown man by Cranach is worth as much as the portrait of Erasmus. The-----  
 I. Aspects of Biography, p.46. Op. Cit.

biographer's art should contrive to set as great a price upon the life of a poor actor as upon the life of Shakespeare. It is a base instinct which makes us note with pleasure the shortened protuberance of the breast-bone in the bust of Alexander or the wisp of hair on Napoleon's forehead. The smile of Monna Lisa, of whom we know nothing (perhaps it is a man's face), is more mysterious. A grimace drawn by Hokusai leads to still deeper contemplation. If we were practising the art in which Boswell and Aubrey excelled we would certainly not have to describe minutely the greatest man of our age or to record the characteristics of the most famous men of the past, but to recount with the same care the individual lives of men, whether god-like, commonplace, or criminal."<sup>1</sup>

Hali, therefore, was not correct when he thought that Gh̄alib was not a proper subject for biography. As the irony would have it, not only is Gh̄alib, like Shelley and Byron, a very suitable subject but it actually proved in the hands of Hali the best subject ever treated by any one in Urdu literature. There is hardly any one who reads "Hayāt-i-Jāwīd"; "Yādgar" is the general favourite. In it we have an entertaining<sup>in</sup> and vivid portrait of Gh̄alib the man. An active adjustment of sympathy results in the reader in going through its pages; he feels as if he is actually in the presence of Gh̄alib—he sees his smiling face, hears his exhilarating conversation, enjoys his bubbling humour. He finds the same influences working round him which moulded Gh̄alib; he moves in his circle, enjoys his gusto in life and poetry and shares his happiness and sorrow.

Hali feared that the life of Gh̄alib would not serve any useful purpose and requested that all matter not relating to his poetry should be ignored as extraneous to the book. Perhaps

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I. Taken from "Aspects of Biography", p.47. Op.Cit.

he did not know that "great men's ideas are the common heritage of humanity; their only individual possessions are their oddities." The greatest charm of the "Yādgar" lies in the very so-called superfluous details which place Hali as a writer in the select company of Aubrey and Boswell. In these details he has laid bare the heart of Ghālib and we can observe the inner workings of his mind, his habits and his manners in all their ramifications. We see the genuine artist and man that Ghālib was restless, sensuous, gaining experience by falling into error, suffering for the sake of others, bearing afflictions with a brave heart and preaching the doctrine of humanity.

Hali had serious qualms of conscience on ethical grounds: the life of Ghālib was far from religious and therefore dangerous in the hands of the readers. Ghālib himself knew better:

لذات باکشفت خوبه بیدار نیستی چمن زنگ و خزانه بود باری جا

Actually we are pleased with Ghālib more than with those others who are so pure that we doubt if they ever existed. In Ghālib good and bad are mixed together. He is human. He is one of us. He erred, he suffered and he learnt. He enriched his soul with experience and when the cup was full he passed it on to us. Ghālib is the Indian Faust and one who finds fault with Faust for his errors betrays ignorance of human nature.

The restless soul of the modern man "troubled by his instincts...worried by his analytical habits of mind...longs to believe

that others have known the struggles which he endures," and has been subject to "the long and painful meditations in which he himself has indulged."<sup>1</sup> Such a soul can find solace in the "Yādgar" the "faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life."<sup>2</sup>

### III.

The theories of art do little harm unless they influence treatment. Hali was influenced in his choice of subject, no doubt, but his treatment is free from intrusive preaching. The Life of Sādī is a fairly critical survey of the life and writings of the Poet. He has scrutinised events and dates and rejected much irrelevant material which tradition had ascribed to him both in Europe and Asia. The life itself has been carefully deduced from the autobiographic material mixed up with the Fables in Gulistān and Būstān. The Life of Ghālib is one of the sanest books on the poet. Hali's sympathy is deep and quiet. It has nothing of the tempestuous ardour of Dr. Ābdur Rahmān Bijnaurī<sup>3</sup> which has actually provoked a reaction against the poet in the best literary circles.<sup>4</sup>

Hali's method of adjudicating between writers by comparing treatment of cognate themes is seriously open to objection. Writers do not exert the same pressure always. Besides genius is too subtle to be measured with tape like church steeples. The object of criticism is to unfold the genius of a writer, not to

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1. "Aspects of Biography", p. 31. Op. Cit.

2. Edmund Gosse: Article on Biography, Encycopaedia Britannica (later

3. "Mahāsin-i-Kalām-i-Ghālib".

4. See Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Latīf's "Ghālib".

award marks as in a competitive examination. Hali is here following the precedent of the older critics to which even Shibli and Browne have succumbed.

Sane as Hali's taste is, he sometimes strains his ingenuity to make out a case for his protagonists. In establishing the superiority of Sādi over Jāmi he waxes eloquent in praise of the second hemistich of the line:

فہم محمد سادہ اندر دشتی      کہ ایران فراوانش از دشتی

as a masterpiece of poetic intuition, forgetting that it is an example of poor padding due to the exigencies of an obdurate rhyme. A similar lapse is evidenced by his anxiety to torture some lines of Ghālīb into a double explanation\_which by the way Dr. Bijnauri would have us believe to be of the same importance as the discovery of America by Columbus. The second explanation of the line:

کیا تم رات غیر از برہنہیں دیا      بس چپ رطوبت میں ہی نہیں زبان سے

is puerile.

But Hali's taste should be measured not by its lapses but its positive achievement, and here no two opinions are possible.

In "Hayāt-i-Jāwid" Hali had to face a very difficult task. Here was a man who, in his opinion, was the savior of his nation, the defender of Islam against the scurrilous attacks of Western writers and the father of modern Urdu literature. This man had also played not an inconsiderable part in moulding Hali's own life\_a fact which he could never forget. He honestly

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believed that if there was a man whose life could be guidance to the youth of his nation he was this man\_Sayyid.

The life of Sayyid was also the history of the Muslim Renaissance to which Hali himself had contributed not a little

To add to his difficulties Sayyid was made the subject of gross misrepresentations and deliberate vilification by those who did not share his views\_religious, social or political\_ and looked upon him as a renegade and time-server. Hali himself did not share many of Sayyid's views in matters religious and could not compromise himself in any way by upholding his hero or justifying him in his ultra-rationalistic interpretation of Islam and the Quranic text.

Discussing pure and impure biography, Harold Nicholson remarks that "the desire to celebrate the dead,... or the desire to compose the life of an individual as an illustration of some extraneous theory or conception...or the undue intrusion of the biographer's personality or predilections" are the chief confusing elements which go to render biography impure.<sup>1</sup>

Hali had to face all these dangers in "Hayat-i-Jawid", but his attempt is fairly successful. He is very keen to maintain strict neutrality although one does come across, here and there a note of special pleading. But he is not a satellite or a hagiographer and can look his idol in the face.

As regards the direct intrusion of his own personality, Hali succeeds wonderfully well in avoiding the danger. Quiet, sincere

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I. Harold Nicholson: "Development of Biography", Hogarth Press, 1929, London. p.9-10.

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and modest, he always kept himself in the background in his life. It was much easier for him to accomplish this in his books.

#### IV.

In his poetry as well as his criticism Hali is always refreshingly himself. They bear the stamp of his personality. We have seen how his partiality for instruction invaded even his biographies. The other aspect of his genius\_his critical faculty\_which made him subject the old institutions and customs to a searching examination, is no less observable in his biographies. He carefully sifts his material, rejects the improbable and the impossible and does not pin his faith to anything that does not stand the test of scrutiny. There are very few exceptions where his respect outruns his judgment, as in the Somnath episode; but on the whole he is sufficiently wide awake to justify his title to the first great biographer in Urdu literature.

## Chapter

## VII.

## Prose Style.

## I.

Nowhere is the criticism of Hali in need of more drastic revision than with regard to his prose style. Thanks to the work of Maulvī Abdul Haq, Maulvī Mehdi Hasan and Dr. Zor, it is no longer a heresy to place the prose works of Hali on a par with his poetry. To his contemporaries as well as the last generation of critics Hali was the incomparable poet whose prose paled before the brilliance of his contemporary Āzād. All this changes as we come to know more and more of the nature and function of style. Nine out of every ten contemporaries of Hali and very well informed ones at that, would have roundly maintained that prose was a minor kind of poetry, and that it was good according as it approximated to the form of poetry. To the Indian mind as to the European in the Middle Ages, style was an isolable element, an ornament that could be put on or put off at will. And this was true not only of the art of poetry or prose, it was true of all fine arts. The Oriental mind is the very antithesis of the Greek. It fails to appreciate the simplicity and serenity of a Greek temple or play, and runs to excess. It is prodigal of beauties, lays the colour on thick and encrusts the simple design with a mass of irrelevant beauties. It was the love of flamboyance which stood in the way of Hali's recognition as a prose writer. Hence the prose writer

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of the century was Azad who scintillates with imagery. Present day prose is more and more going the way of Hali and Sir Sayyid. Āzād's is but a questionable style.

## II.

Hali like Sir Sayyid from whom he took his cue, had no theories of style like Flaubert, Stevenson or Walter Pater. He wrote as he spoke naturally and easily and though he did not excel in music is uniformly readable. His work as a prose-writer has been to perfect the literary prose style created by Sir Sayyid. The latter was a trifle heavy and unmusical. Hali smoothed and polished the medium and made it the ideal style for the discussion of serious themes. For a correct measure of his achievement it should not be forgotten that he was a pioneer. He was bending a language which had no literary traditions to the task of expressing the complexities of thought and fine shades of meaning for which it was notoriously unfit.

Of course serious objection can be made to his use of English words for which there are equivalents in Urdu. Words such as 'point', 'self-help', 'nature', 'judgment', 'Asiatic', 'poetry', 'works', 'imagination', 'supernatural', 'material', 'reformation', 'immoral', 'political', 'social', 'hero', 'civilisation', *Simple, direct*, 'constitution', 'mechanics', 'literature', 'despotic government', 'self-respect', 'public speaking', 'kingdom' could easily have been avoided and replaced by Urdu words of equal if not better quality. Their use becomes almost ridiculous when he proceeds to form adjectival compounds like "critical ṭarīqa", "literary duny

"political mushkilāt", "Christianity salṭanat", etc. Such combinations offend the ear but Hali seems to be so fond of them that he even drags them in his poems. The reason is the naive desire for show which he shared with some of his contemporaries, particularly Nazīr Aḥmad.

A greater danger lay in another direction. A profound scholar of Persian and Arabic Hali had always the temptation to fall back upon these legitimate sources to enrich his vocabulary for the exposition of abstruse thoughts, philosophical concepts and metaphysical discussions of such varied subjects as religion, poetry and criticism. Fortunately his selection of these words was judicious and discreet. He avoids their excessive use as one finds in Abul Kalām Āzād and has always the eye on their expressiveness and adaptability to the genius of Urdu language. No doubt at times he does become pedantic and shows a tendency towards ponderous polysyllables like: or

انزاح - حقائق واقعیہ - اتل قیس - الف وعات - اصطف وعتاب - حکیم اللہ اللہ  
 محاربت - عظمت - سن ورج - تمباور - مارا اللہ - محلی عنہ نفس الامری وجود  
 نوبت - سن مل الوجہ - حقوق - تالیبہ - باب عربا - محاش  
 یح بحیرہ - تفاول - موصل الی المطلوب - منوط - استقرا - مطارحات

which are too heavy and pedagogic to be assimilated in Urdu but on the whole his justice of perception secures the effect by the happy selection and juxtaposition of simple words as will be clear from the following sentences:

۱. چون حقیقت کی حدود اربعہ صاف اور روشنی اور اجماعت کے پروردگار تعالیٰ

یوتہ جاتے ہیں اس قدر شادی کے سیمائی جہت کے مافوق یوتہ جاتے ہیں

کیونکہ دو متناقض چیزیں یعنی حقیقت اور دعویٰ جو ایک ہی ہو سکتی ہیں۔ صفحہ ۱۱۳ جلد ۱

۲. تاہم اگر حقیقت کوئی خاصیت ہے۔ اس کے راسخ۔ اس کے عادی ہیں ایک کار خیز ہیں

میدان اور ذوق بدلتا ہے اس قدر شادی حالت بدلتی ہے یعنی اس کے تہیہ بائبل باہم ہوتا ہے  
کیونکہ سوائے اس حالت اور دیگر شادی سے ان پانچوں میں بدلتا ہے سوائے اس کے ساتھ ساتھ

۳. خود بخود بدلتا ہے جتنا ہے۔ صفحہ ۱۶ جلد ۱

۳. ... انسان کا لہجہ صرف شادی کی کمی و کمزوری نہیں ہے بلکہ اس کی نسبت شادی کی اور نہ ہونے کی

معمولی اور ایک چیز۔ ان کے فعلی یا جذباتی اس قدر خراب ہو سکتے ہیں جتنے کہ جبر و یا ان اور

حکمت کے خراب ہو سکتے ہیں اور یہ ہمیشہ ادھر اور ان کے ذہن میں انسان کی کیفیت کے یوتہ ہیں جو ان کے

ان کے لہجہ میں موجود ہیں۔ یہ نفس ان کی باہر کی اور جو تین کیفیتوں

ان کے فعلی کے ذریعے سے خراب ہو سکتی ہیں۔ شادی کے فائدے کے نام اور شادی خارجی اور ذہنی

کے فائدے کے نام سے۔ عالم محسوس۔ دولت کے انعقاد سے سیرت ان کی معاشرت نوع ان کی۔

تمام چیزیں جو حقیقت کی حقیقت موجود ہیں اور نام کے چیزیں جن کے لئے مختلف اشیا کے

اخبار اور اس کے مدد کر لیا جا سکتا ہے سب شادی کی کیفیت میں محسوس ہیں

شادی کی کیفیت کے جس کے کمزور اور اس کے وسیع کے لئے حقیقت کے خیال کے کمزور۔

As opposed to these Persian and Arabic elements the strong predilection for simplicity occasionally took him to the extreme notices in some of the present day English writers who in their mania for purism deliberately substitute quaint and unfamiliar Anglo-Saxon words for their popular Latin and Greek equivalents. His success in some cases does not compensate the general failure in the employment of such inartistic words as:

تاریخہ - برصا - عبوری - اجرین - لباند - نغز نذر بعینہ کا چٹخارا - نیت نیت کر  
 وہ نہ دیکھتی رہی جہاں آیت رہے تھے - پیلوون - عبوی - اکیا زنا - ناک رنخ والد -  
 چٹ پی کڈنڈا - تلمیٹ - جوں کی طرح چٹ پڑا - گرگنا - کرید نیبار - چٹ -

With these limitations (and such words are not many) Hali's use of words is as a rule unexceptionable and most often felicitous. His diction is pithy, full, strong and compendious. His main aim is clarity and power and in this he invariably succeeds. His vocabulary was fairly large and he had always the temptation to glory in its wealth but consistent with his object the conveyance of his meaning exactly fitted with his own intention and unmistakable by the reader he practised restraint and austerity.

When Hali wrote his "Muqaddima" there was no criticism in the Urdu language and he had to coin words to define ideas. His practical nature helped him in his attempt to give the new terms a compulsive vigour which makes them quite fit for the discussion and exposition of intellectual and metaphysical subjects.

But these are not the words which are the main thing in prose; it is the sentence. Herein it chiefly differs from poetry which being creative expression "may inhere in a single word, in a single syllable." The peculiar rhythm of prose demands the sentence the structure whereof goes a long way towards the determination of the artistic value of a literary work. The final end of style is to adapt itself to the different modes of thought which naturally differ from subject to subject. Scientific studies, history, biography, philosophical discourses, criticism all demand different styles and therefore sentences of different structure, length and rhythm. Hali's works are either critical or biographical. Their analytical study shows that Hali is fond of long periodic sentences which are most appropriate to the "Muqaddima" and the critical portions of his other works. Such writings require weighty and monumental style to impress the solidity of thought upon the reader; and in so far as Hali's sentences import an air of solemnity and deliberation to his criticism they are a great success. This is borne out by the following:

یہ آپ کا ایک محقق کہتا ہے کہ شغل و مینوی میں الینا کر سہید جو قوتیں ہوجاتی ہیں شوان اور جہانگیر  
 اور یہ بچپن کے ان خالص اور پاک جذبات کو جو ایش غرض کا داغ سے نرہ و برآتا ہے پیر  
 ترو تیز آ رہا ہے۔ مینوی ناموں کا مشن اور صارت سے شب وین میں تیزی آجاتی ہے اور دل  
 بالکل رہ جاتا ہے۔ جب اللہ سے میں قوت لے لیتا ہے یا تو ان کی میں جاہ و سہب کے ہے  
 کرشش کا جاتی ہے اور دنیا میں چاروں طرف خود ختمی دیکھی جاتی ہے اک دست انن کو

نکتہ سفلیں بیسیں اتیس اراکے سے جسکی کوئی ایلی علیہ نہ معلوم خود دل سے پیدا نہ اور  
 تر دماہہ کرنے میں جھپٹے جھپٹے کی طرح نہایت قوت کے ساتھ اندس کی صورت میں اسم اور  
 تو تری کی صورت میں تریاق نام سے لکھے یہ خاصیت خدا نے انہیں دوسلیت کی تو  
 وہ ہم دھندلاتے دیکھنے سے نہ لگتے نہ لگتے اور انہیں حاکموں کو بہاری کی موجودہ حالت  
 پر غالب اور دنیا پر شکر اور محض عقل و ذریعہ سے نہیں بلکہ زیادہ تر ذہن اور اور  
 کے ذریعہ عقل پر عقوبت کی پر قوم انچہ ذہن کی صورت اور اور ان کی عقوبت کی طرف  
 شکر عقلی خاصہ اللہ باری ہے ۔  
 صفحہ ۱۰۱

Here the style is impressive and condensed. The words are carefully weighed and well-knit and the long periods lend the thought the necessary dignity.

In another place he writes:

توئی انکار، قوی عزت، عہد و بیان کی پابندی ۔ بادلوں کے اپنے تمام غم کو پرکھنا،  
 استقلال کے ساتھ سختیوں کو برداشت کرنا اور یہ خاصہوں پر گمانہ لگانی جو باک  
 ذریعہ سے عقلی طور سے اور ایک قسم کی وہ تمام فضیلت جنہوں سے ہمارے قوم تمام  
 ان کے ہیں جبکہ عقلی اور جنہوں سے انہوں سے ہر کسی کے ہر کسی قوی سلطنت دنیا  
 کی نظروں میں ذلیل مورتی رہتی ہے اور کسی قوم میں باک شری کی بدولت پیدا نہ ہوگی  
 جائیں تو عہد بشہن کی بنیاد تو اس میں شری کی بدولت پرانی ہے ۔  
 صفحہ ۱۰۲

Here is a beautiful instance of the antithesis which reminds the reader of a Newman. But it is often by his use of the periodic that Hali creates a suspense which keeps the reader

intensely alive and sustains his curiosity upto the very last word of the sentence. Here is an example:

۱۱ وہ اکبات کو تسلیم نہیں کرتا کہ سوائے کائنات کے .. تجھیں کی حالت صغیف عورتی  
 ہے بلکہ رزق تو اس کے کہ جب اس دن یہ اعتقاد ہے کہ اب اس کے ساتھ ہمارا رشتہ  
 مضبوطی جب بات بے شائبہ اور حوالہ جنہ انکار نہیں ہو سکتا چاہے یہ کلف  
 کے ہم کو گئے ہوئے ہیں بدقسمتوں ان کے دل پر صوفیوں پر اور فرزند شہزاد  
 رداؤ انہوں کو اور ایک دفعہ بنا سکتا ہے جب اس قوموں میں عبودیت کا جو شہ جو ہے  
 جب اس میں تو ہے ان کی سب سے پہلے تنقید سوا کمال پر نہ ہے کافر ہے  
 اور جب اس حوالہ اور دماغ جو زندگی میں دنا لہو وقت حادثہ ہے  
 فوشی یا غم کا سلسلہ ضیائی کرتا ہے جب اس کے بات کی  
 حزن نہیں ہو سکتا کہ تجھیں کی حالت ہم سب جیسا ہے اور اس کے  
 لیکن فوش جب اس کے پھر ان کا مان لکھی ہوئی ہے اکبات  
 کا ہے کہ شاعر کا ذوق بڑھ جائے

His smaller periodic sentences also show the same compactness and solidity:

یہی سب سے کہ تمام دنیا شورا کا ادب اور تعلیم رتی سے جنیوں نے  
 اس فتم سبکی کی بدولت جو قوتِ تخلیق نے ان کے ہفتہ سیدی سے ان میں  
 ایسی تخریب اور براہینتیں پیدا کی سے جو خود سب سے یا اس کا لفظ سے جاننا اور  
 شرا کی ترتیب سے وقت اور تناسب الفاظ اور آواز پر انہیں پوراں کو ایسے  
 پر ترتیب دینا کہ شوق سے منہ مقصد کے سمجھنے میں محال کو کچھ تردد باقی نہ رہے  
 اور خیال کی تقریروں میں آئینوں کے مانے پر جائے اور باوجود اس کے اس کا ترتیب  
 میں ایک جا دو فنی ہو جو فی قلب و سخن اس کا حصہ کا ہے انہیں  
 شواہد اس قدر خود کی ہیں کہ گویا ان شواہد میں یہ بات نہیں ہے تو اس کے  
 کہنے سے کہیں بہتر ہے۔ صفحہ ۱۷۰ - صفحہ ۱۷۱

But sometimes the attempt to write such sentences confuses the meaning. They become long-winded and therefore tiresome and awkward. This the reader feels most in his biographical works which being of a narrative nature require short sentences to convey the impression of speed. Most of these sentences are merely agglomeration of loosely connected clauses lacking balance and proportion, moving heavily and marred by the excessive use of the connective "and". Here are some of these sentences:

اب دیکھیں یہاں میں جب کہ میں وہی میں تعلیم تھا بعض اوقات کا تخریب سے اس

کو اور زیادہ تقویت ہوئی۔ میں نے مرزا کی تصنیفات کو دیکھ کر  
 متحیر رہا کہ جو کچھ یہ ہے وہ حقیقتاً اس میں ان کے حالات اور اعتقاد  
 عادت کا سراغ ملتا ہے کہ قلم جو جمع نامہ کی اور جو باتیں اپنے ذہن  
 میں کھینچتے ہیں یا دیکھتے ہیں ان کا نام نہیں لیتے ان کو نہیں پہنچتے ہیں یا  
 کہ اس میں ترمیم یا ترمیم کا وقت نہ پہنچتا ہے کہ اور ماہوں میں کھول  
 ہو گیا اور کئی برس تک وہ تمام یادداشتیں کاغذ کے ٹکڑوں میں بندھی  
 ہوئی رہی ہیں۔ یاد رہے۔ صفحہ ۲۰۲

ii  
 اگرچہ مرزا نے قلم برہن میں اعتراف کیا ہے ہے کہ وہ لفظ عربی اور فارسی  
 کے متعلق ایسا ہی ناش عدلی کا ہے کہ اس کو لفظ عربی اور فارسی  
 ارف قرار دیا ہے اور اس عدلی کا آخری ناموں نے خود ہی اعتراف کیا ہے اور عربی  
 الفاظ کی تحقیق سے اپنی عدلی ثابت کی ہے، اور عدلی کے ساتھ اس کا لفظ عربی  
 کہیں کہیں ان سے عدلی ہوئی ہو، لیکن اگر الفاظ سے دیکھا جائے تو قلم ان  
 کے دماغ سے مرزا کی عدلی کچھ اور ذوق صحیح کا ماننی ثبوت ملتا ہے اور جیسا کہ  
 اہل علم پر متفق ہے کہ "نارک زبان کے قواعد و ضوابط پر علم میں اس کا علم  
 جائز ہے جیسے فولہ میں جوہر فی الواقع نارک زبان سے انوکھی ثابت ہو  
 ہوئی ہے۔ صفحہ ۲۰۲۔ یاد رہے۔

iii  
 ایک شخص مرزا احمد علی بیگ موقوفہ اعلیٰ، جنوں نے مرزا کے مدد فرمایا۔ سب کو کتاب  
 مدید البرکن لکھی، جس کے بقولت تمام انشائیہ سوانح کا کتب خانہ قلم برکن کے  
 حیدر اور اقل تر دیدیہ کے ہے۔ چنانچہ مرزا لکھنؤ کے مرزا کے کہ اعراض انہیں  
 نہیں کیا اور جو سب لغو مرزا نے ملکہ برکن کا نسبت شمال لکھا ہے ایسے یا مرزا  
 کا نسبت شمال لکھا ہے اس میں اپنے تئیں اصغیانہ الاصل قرار دیا ہے اور ایک فہم بہار اور تہمت  
 کا نسبت توفیق کی ہے اور اپنی کتاب کا توفیق میں توفیق لکھنؤ اور تازہ تہمت لکھنؤ اور کتاب خانہ  
 میں بیچوانی ہیں اگر کہ جو اس میں مرزا نے ایک بار لکھا ہے: "تہمت لکھنؤ اور اس بار کہ توفیق میں ان کے  
 مدید"۔

The last sentence is jerky, its grammar is bad and the repetition of the verb "likhna" in the last clause inartistic.

It is strange that most of these lapses occur in "Yādgār-i-Ghālib". It is possibly due to the fact that he took it up very unwillingly on the insistence of his friends when he had some other important work in hand. The earlier work, "Hayāt-i-Sādī", reveals a greater mastery of language. On the whole Hali is very strong in exposition. He can marshal his arguments with consummate skill as every reader of the "Muqaddima" will know. But his narrative powers are of an inferior sort. Compare the Life of Ghālib with Āzād's sketch of Zauq and you will at once see how much he lacks the graphic touch of the latter. The reader will find that most of Hali's poor passages are of a narrative character though in some cases he does attain conspicuous success.

#### IV.

Hali is more happy in his paragraphs. He constructs them with evident ease, keeping in hand the balance of sentences and

the harmony of cadences. He constructs them on the logical basis and devotes one paragraph to one thought. In the "Muqaddima" the paragraphs sometimes cover two or three pages and their length and compactness impresses the reader with the seriousness of the subject. There is nothing of the raciness of "Ab-i-Hay" in them. Hali has a very high sense of the unity of conception and is always careful to subordinate to his artistic purpose the rambling propensities which mar the works of inferior writers.

## V.

But the permanence of the appeal of a work of art does not lie in the point or the vivacity of sentences or the brilliancy of the paragraphs. It is the ordering of the material, the logical arrangement of ideas, the coherence of the plan and the economies of discipline which go to secure to a book a high place in literature. Hali realised the importance of the constructional arrangement of a book and the difficulties an author had to encounter to give art-form to the raw mass of material. Writing about it he says:

"Simplicity and spontaneity are indispensable in any writing but they are the very soul of history and biography...The arrangement of his material, especially when writing the life of a great personality, is so arduous and exacting a task for the writer provided he is keen to acquit himself worthily that it totally exhausts him. If others have preceded him in writing the life of his hero and he does no more than follow them, he has, no doubt, nothing to worry about. But if no one has written anything on the subject or the writer merely accepts the material from his predecessors and does not follow their arrangement of it, he is sure to have a very hard time ahead. He divides the book in so many sections and chapters under a radically different system, assigns the mass of heterogeneous and formless matter to these sections and chapters and arranges them in

proper sequence and order under the relevant heads. The same incident seems sometimes appropriate in one chapter and sometime in the other; sometime in the beginning of the book and sometimes at its conclusion.

Philosophy supplies us with various definitions of beauty, of which the best seems to be the one which declares it to be the name of the symmetry of limbs. To say therefore about a book that its arrangement is correct, is to acknowledge that it has no defect. Much the same as we acknowledge the perfection of beauty in man by declaring him to be the owner of a symmetrical body."<sup>1</sup>

In his own case Hali was successful in all his works except "Hayāt-i-Jāwīd." "In "Hayāt-i-Sādī" he brings an analytical and critical mind to work and shows how "a great work of literature is not so much the triumph of language, as the victory over the language." Discarding all redundancies and irrelevant considerations, he presents his thesis in a solid, alive form which has a pleasing and artistic effect on the whole.

In "Yādgār-i-Ghālib" he makes the Eadmerian use of letters to support or verify his statements, brings in annotative incidents, quotes from the record of conversation and fuses together the narrative and the pictorial, thus giving a life-like vividness to his portraiture. The development is natural though the exposition is sometimes unhappy, as in the "Journey to Calcutta", where the story begins at the wrong end.

"Hayāt-i-Jāwīd", his last important work and one in which he took a great interest, strangely enough, happens to be the most disappointing as a work of art. It seems that under the influence

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I. "Mazāmin-i-Hali", p.151. Op. Cit.

of the "two-volume Victorian commemorative biographies," Hali wanted to write as much as possible. He labours under the mistaken notion that it is a condition of hero's worship to know all about him. Unnecessary details and much extraneous matter make "Hayāt-i-Jāwīd" a shapeless haystack of a book. Biography to be work of art requires a deliberate brevity and a careful choice of such aspects as enable personality to be exhibited in the most brilliant light. "Hayāt-i-Jāwīd", on the other hand, is immensely detailed and annoyingly repetitive.

## VI.

But when all is said, Hali remains a great figure in the realm of Urdu prose. "All style," says Walter Raleigh, "is a gesture, the gesture of the mind and the soul." The style of Hali lays bare to us his personality. It is simple, sincere and sinewy. He has no ambition to seize le mot propre but his innate love of directness saved him from the conversational expansiveness from which Āzād, generally, and Shiblī, occasionally, suffer. He has a tendency towards reserve, to diminished tone in colouring and to parsimony of rhetorical resources. Those who are out to seek purple passages in him<sup>1</sup> are doomed to disappointment: Hali's themes prohibit them. These critics seem to be haunted by the bogey of grand style—the incrusting of language with ornamental excrescences and elegant curiosities. But the function of prose is construction and to

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I. See Saīd Anṣārī: "Shiblī", An-Nāzīr Press, Lucknow.

be good it must be calculating. The cool intelligence of Hali enables him to bring home the effect with the minimum waste of energy. On the whole his style is copious, full-blooded and fluent and is eminently suited to literary criticism and intellectual exposition. It cannot be said of him what is said of Dryden that he found the Urdu prose a brick and left it gold. But he certainly did a great service to it by extending its range, enriching its vocabulary and making it more plastic and musical.

Hali's influence on modern Urdu prose has been overwhelming. Āzād has left a trace on the style of Khwāja Hasan Nizāmi, Maulvī Ābdul Haq, Prof. Shīrānī, Muhammad Yahya Tanhā and a few others. But the greater part of the present-day Urdu prose is going the way of Hali and Sir Sayyid. This is because their genius is the sublimation of the ordinary matter-of-fact man. Āzād's prose is rich in poetic elements and therefore it is unsuitable for purposes of criticism and discussion.

## Chapter

## VIII.

## The Influence Of Hall.

## I.

There is a great deal to be said even today for the "Great-man theory" of history. The writings of Vico, Montesquieu, Buckle, Karl Marx, Morgan and others have done much to discredit it; and there is no doubt that the theory as propounded by Carlyle and his pupil Froude had all the disadvantages of an extremist view. But the theory is sound at the core; and there is little danger of its ever falling into obsolescence. Criticism has only served to emphasise the large element of truth it contains.

The view of the school which eliminates, as far as possible the individual, or at least treats him as a mere accident in the progress of a social group has been well expressed by Herbert Spencer:

"You must admit that the genesis of the great man depends on the long series of complex influence which has produced the race in which he appears and the social state in which that race has slowly grown. But before he can really make his society, his society must make him. All these changes of which he is the proximate initiator have their chief causes in the generation he descended from."<sup>1</sup>

To the same effect writes Prof. Seligman:

"All that we know thus far is that every man is what he is because of the influences of environment, past or present ... This is the reason why the 'great-man theory' of history has well-nigh disappeared. No one, indeed, denies the value of great-men. . . But few now overlook the essential dependen

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I. Herbert Spencer: "Study of Sociology, Williams and Norgate, London, 1876; pp. 33-35.

the  
of/great man upon the wider social environment amid which  
he has developed.

Aristotle, the greatest thinker of antiquity, defended slavery because slavery was at the time an integral part of the whole fabric of Greek civilization. A Jefferson would be impossible in Turkey as a Pobyedonostseff in the United States...On the other hand, the effects ascribed to great men are often largely the results of forces of which they were only the chance vehicles. Caesar erected the Roman Empire, but the empire would undoubtedly have come ultimately with or without Caesar. Napoleon for the time transformed the face of Europe, but the France of to-day would in all probability have been in its essentials the same had Napoleon not lived. Washington and Lincoln assuredly exercised the most profound influence on their times, but it is scarcely open to doubt that in the end the Revolution would have succeeded and the Rebellion would have failed, even though Washington and Lincoln had never existed."<sup>1</sup>

Over against these may be set the view of Prof. Mathews who cautiously advocates the Great-man theory:

"The historian," he says, "can safely lay down the thesis that social situations do not produce great men; they give a great man the opportunity to exercise and develop his power by doing great things..."

Great men happen neither biologically nor historically. They are both creatures and creators. They can be understood best when they are regarded as personal forces in situations which are themselves creative but which great men are to some extent able to direct. They are individual dominants mating with social dominants to produce social and rarely individual descendants.

Recur again to the Reformation. Luther and Melanchthon partook essentially of the same economic, geographical and social forces. But had one attempted the work of the other, the difference of their reaction would have produced a different historical movement. For they themselves were different persons. If Luther, for example, had possessed the broader tolerance of Melanchthon Protestantism might have been spared many a conflict. Similarly, when one compares Calvin with Luther and Melanchthon on the one side and let us say, Erasmus and the English Humanists on the other, one can see the contribution which his own personal made to history."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Edwin R. A. Seligman: "The Economic Interpretation of History", 1924; p92-94.

2. Shailer Mathews: "The Spiritual Interpretation of History", Oxford University Press, 1916; pp. 113-117.

I have quoted at some length from the opposite schools of thought, which explain civilisation as the result of personal and impersonal forces to determine, as far as possible, the exact influence of Hali on the course of Urdu literature. It will be conceded at once by most that the literature which began to come out subsequent to the publication of the "Musaddas" bears more than a superficial resemblance to Hali's poetry. The chief features of his poetry are more or less there; the same strong critical and social note, the same forward-looking philosophy, the same sentimental and wistful study of the past. Formalism and acceptance whether in religion, literature or philosophy are strongly attacked. The spirit of criticism is abroad and even the most sacred institutions are decried, the new culture is defended and extolled, and people exhorted to adapt themselves to their new conditions. Even where there is no direct imitation the proximity to Hali in tone and sentiment is too intimate to be explained away merely as the spirit of the time.

All this strongly points to the influence of Hali on his contemporaries. It will, however, be said against this view that Hali was the product of his times; that his genius ripened in a particular environment which he shared with others. There were two great factors that went to the making of Hali; an original and sensitive mind and a certain atmosphere we compendiously designate as Renaissance. But all these forces which moulded his genius were playing round his contemporaries

also. Ever since the establishment of the Delhi College in 1827 the Western civilisation, through the channels of English literature and thought had begun to work unconsciously on the mind of the people. The period from 1827-1857 may be called the seed-time of the Islamic Renaissance when the old ideas were crumbling and the new ideas were coming to life, although they were yet working under the soil. The <sup>Aligarh</sup> Movement was the first fruit of the impact of the Western civilisation on the Muslims in Northern India. Hali was the product of this movement. Historically, as we know, he was not the first, nor even the greatest, to absorb and mature the new ideas. He received a definite impulse from Sir Sayyid whom he gratefully acknowledges as his master. As a poet Hali has done nothing but strongly emotionalised the philosophy or message of Sir Sayyid to his age. No doubt, he had the gift of passionate utterance which enabled him to turn the cold light of Sir Sayyid into a gorgeous and flaming vision like the one seen by Paul on his way to Damascus. But the change would have come sooner or later in Urdu literature, Hali or no Hali, is proved by a number of facts.

1. The astounding popularity of the "Musaddas" and the hopes and fears that it stirred and the increasing volume of imitative verse following it show that Hali was not addressing the advanced few, but expressing the feelings and thoughts of the millions. His 'naturalistic' verse which had preceded the "Musaddas" fell flat because his world was not yet prepared

for it. On the contrary the abnormal reaction to his "millī poetry even when it was not of a higher order points to the fact that Hali was the mouthpiece of his age.

ii. The spontaneous outburst of new poetry in the Panjab and in Agra in U.P. under Ismā'īl, bears out the thesis that the impact of the West had considerably weakened conservative resistance to the new ideals.

iii. The close resemblance between the poetry of Hali and the modern Bengali, Hindi and Marhatti verse, where the influence of Hali could not penetrate on account of the difference of language, is the strongest proof of the fact that excluding his influence on his imitators the course of Urdu poetry would have been the same even without Hali.

iv. This is further clear from the fact that a similar political, social and "millī" poetry appeared simultaneously in Turkey and Persia. These influences must have worked on Urdu poetry sooner or later especially because the political situation of the Muslims in India demanded it much more acutely than the conditions in those two countries which were comparatively free from foreign interference or domination.

## II.

What was then the influence of Hali on the life and literature of his time in a general way?

Genius has been defined as an individual way of looking at things. Whereas the ordinary man looks at things as others do, that is, in a conventional manner, conforming his conduct to standards and authority at every step, genius moves unfettered

by the clogging weight of rules and prescription. It is a law unto itself; and nowhere is a genius seen more at work than in lessening the weight of authority. This is what the history of religion, philosophy and science at every step reveals. Genius always works for emancipation. This was above all the work accomplished by Hali. There were strong signs of a new consciousness in the people; but the new consciousness found no expression because of the fear of authority. To Hali belongs the credit of having burst the bands which bound the generation. He showed them the way, he led the assault on authority in matters poetical as Sir Sayyid did in social and religious affairs, and thereby gave the pent up energy of his age a chance for self-expression. The work of emancipation done by his poetry was further strengthened by his criticism especially his "Muqaddima". His poetry stormed their hearts, his prose criticism won their intellect, thus completing the work of emancipation. From this point of view it is difficult to exaggerate the influence of Hali. He broke the spell of centuries and released his countrymen from ~~the~~ bondage to the past thus inaugurating the dawn of a new world in the land.

For an analogy of the influence of Hali on his contemporaries and successors one is reminded of the influence of Chapman on Keats or Byron on Pushkin. He helped them to discover themselves. "It frequently happens," writes the Hon'ble Maurice Baring, "that when a poet is deeply struck by the works of another poet he feels a desire to write something himself,

but something different."<sup>1</sup> This is Hali's contemporaries and successors reacted to him. It would be absurd to treat Shibli, Ismā'il, Salīm, Akbar and Iqbāl as Hali's satellites, although even they have their moments of imitation. Hali was simply the guide to a new world.

So far about the greater spirits which had the gifts of individuality. The lesser men react in a different manner to the works of an original writer. Feeling no compelling need for self-expression, but intent on fame, they begin to imitate the great masters. They begin to treat their works as supersititious treat a talisman. In their themes, treatment, words, imagery and other idiosyncracies they seem to see a hidden virtue and glibly echo his sentiments. Hali had a host of such imitators who ran riot for a quarter of a century and then the school died of its own surfeit. Hali had, therefore, twofold influence. The more important of the poets were liberated, while the rank and file simply exchanged one set of conventions for another. The history of poetry is somewhat analogous to that of religion. The prophet or the religious reformer is essentially a rebel who destroys one system to consecrate another. Hali had nothing of the egoism of a prophet or a religious reformer, nor did he legislate in favour of certain themes and topics. But his followers treated them as magical formulae and wore them threadbare in a quarter of a century.

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One more important reservation before I discuss the  
 I. "An Outline of Russian Literature", The Home University Library  
 Thornton and Butterworth, 1929; London; p.63.

individual authors and their works. The impulse which Hali imparted to the life and literature of his times did not travel unmodified from one author to another. It was modified or amplified as it travelled down, growing more and more complex, absorbing as it did something of the individuality of each author, and the tone and requirement of his age and audience. But however overlaid or disguised, it was still there. If there is an evolution in the social processes as in the biological world, the first forward impulse which Hali imparted to the life and letters of his age will always be there in spite of the infinite series of transmutations it undergoes in the course of centuries. One may belong to the school of Iqbāl or Akbar, yet, different as they are from each other and from Hali, they have absorbed the influences which Hali originally generated, and therefore, despite their ~~despite their~~ difference of method and purpose they are affiliated to him.

Although the influence of Hali has permeated all sections of the Indian people where Urdu is written or spoken, yet certain areas at first failed to make response to his call. The opposition was strongest in Delhi and Lucknow, the chief centres of classical traditions; especially the latter where the Oudh Punch, very much in the spirit of the Edinburgh and the Quarterly Reviews in the first decades of the 19th century in England, violently attacked the poet. On the other hand provinces like the Panjab and Hyderabad where the classical

traditions were none too strong, were the first to greet the work and mission of Hali. As a poet and critic Hali has not come to his own in these two provinces and his greatness, if at all, has been grudgingly acknowledged. His work special bore fruit in the Panjab. As an outlying province of the Moghal Empire the Panjab had luckily escaped the rigid formalism of the court atmosphere. Nor did it share the arrogance of an effete culture which made the other provinces impervious to the value of a different yet higher civilisation. From the very dawn of Indian history, the Panjab has been the gate to India, and if it suffered most it had the advantage of absorbing more completely than others the Persian, Greek and Islamic cultures, thus being subject to periodic renovation, or at least being free from the undurating influences of long-established traditions. Here the fusion among the races has been the strongest. The caste system is weakest here. It was here that after a period of sullen isolation Islam and Hinduism were reconciled in the eclectic faith of Guru Nanak. Elsewhere the new school of poetry had to fight long against prejudice; in the Panjab it was accorded an enthusiastic welcome.

### III.

The influence of Hali can well be discussed under the following heads:-

- I. Influence on Poetry:
  - i. Subject-matter.
  - ii. Forms.
  - iii. Diction.
- II. Influence on Prose:

- i. Criticism.
- ii. Biography.

These items of influence may be discussed either separately or from time to time in connection with the review of the chief poets of the New School. I shall prefer to give a general survey of Urdu poetry from the time of Hali and wind up the discussion by summarising the nature and extent of Hali's influence under the various heads given above.

Considering the length of the thesis, the notes on the poets will be of the briefest. As there is no need to discuss separately the "Millī" poets who imitated Hali I shall take them all together and indicate the nature of their work.

#### IV.

The "Millī" poetry of which Hali is the real founder made an immediate conquest of his contemporaries. It not only grew with wonderful speed among the Muslims, it allied itself with the revivalistic tendencies in all religions and thus grew into a strong weapon in the hands of all who either wanted to reform their community, or to give them self-respect and self-confidence by lauding the achievements of their ancestors. The great problem before the different communities in India was to reap all the benefits of the Western culture without its dangers by reinforcing religious instruction by purely secular education, to keep the youths in touch with their religious traditions. Thus there sprang up all over the country denominational institutions. They were a sort of half-way houses where the East and West were made to join hands to hush

the suspicions of the religiously-minded people who looked with grave doubts on a purely secular education. These were essentially middle-class institutions run, no doubt, under the patronage of the nobility or whatever was left of it, but principally owed their existence to the enterprise of the middle class which was fast growing and coming to the fore-front. Being essentially religious like the middle class in England after the Restoration it responded with elacrity to its religious conscience, and therefore it grew into a strong literary fashion to recount the greatness of Muslims in the past, their self-sacrifice and love of Islam to ensure their co-operation and support. Thus the passionate and fervid belief of Hali sank into a sentimental creed. Year after year, with wonderful persistence was the "Milli" verse produced to order, as it is today, and the audiences were never tired of it despite its mediocrity and even flatness; such a hold it had acquired on them.

Among the Muslims, the Ālīgarh College, the Muhammadan Educational Conference and Anjuman-i-Himayāt-i-Islam, Lahore, especially the latter (which is celebrating its 50th anniversary today) are intimately connected with the growth of the "Milli" poetry. The yearly meetings of the Anjuman, with its usual appeal to the religious conscience of the people, have laid the foundation of a most stubborn tradition, which, though slightly on the wane, is still very strong. So deep-seated is communal bias in India (I use it in no disparaging sense) that

nothing seems to go down with the people except the poetry that stimulates its religious predispositions. Iqbal caught the public ear with this poetry. He did not gain general recognition until he began to solemnise about religion in his "Nāla-e-Yatīm", "Dard-i-Dil yā Ek Yatīm ka Khitāb Hilāl-i-Īd ko", "Islamia College ka Khitāb Panjab ke Musalmanon ko", "Din-o-Dunyā", "Faryād-i-Ummat", "Shikwa wa Jawāb-i-Shikwa", which were later followed by "Shamā wa Shāir", "Khizr-i-Rāh", "Talū-i-Islam" and others. A more remarkable instance of the hold of this poetry on the masses is the phenomenal rise of the author of "Shah Nama-e-Islam". His "Naghma Zar", published a few years earlier, is full of promise as a pioneer work. It strikes an original note in its strong sensuous love of nature so rare in India and its pagan note which reminds one of Omar Khayyam. But the book stirred no more than a tiny ripple except among a few aesthetes who acclaimed him as a new voice. But the influence of the environment, the need for public recognition and the exigencies of bread and butter have forced him in<sup>to</sup> the religious camp, and financially he has been more successful than Iqbal ten times over. The irony of it all is that from the literary point of view Shahnama-e-Islam is the least important of the author's works.<sup>1</sup>

Other works of the nature have begun coming out. Manzūr Hās had started his Shahnama-e-Islam in the pages of "Sufi" of -----  
I. See his "Soz-o-Saz", the second volume of his verses.

Pindi, Baha-ud-Din simultaneously with Hāfiz, and Sayyid Inyāt Husain Masrūr of Anhona followed with his "Kārnāma-e-Islam" the Life of the Prophet in Musaddas form.

The following are the more important of the minor "Millī" poets most of whom come from the Panjab:

1. Wahīd-ud-Dīn Salīm of Panipat. A man of considerable originality and critical insight, there is hardly any other writer or poet of importance who has been more profoundly influenced by Hali than Salīm. He is also one of the first few who joined Sir Sayyid in his great task. He is very versatile and besides some prose work of merit he wrote a number of "Millī" and nature poems. Sincere and passionate like Hali, he is more colourful in his diction. His message is the same as that of Hali-"Action."

2. Maulvī Zafar Ālī, B.A. (Alīg). He has popularised "Millī" poetry more than anyone else by encouraging it in the columns of his daily paper "Zamīndār". Most of the "Millī" poets came into prominence or even into the knowledge of the outside world through this paper. The Maulvī Sahib himself is one of the greatest\_rather the greatest\_living improvisors of topical verse. Some of his poems are inspired by genuine emotions and are powerful.

3. Shams-ul-Ūlāmā Nazīr Ahmad, LL.D. (Delhi)
4. Shāhzada Abdul Ghani Arshad, Gorgānī. (Delhi).
5. Mirān Bakhsh Jalwa (Sialkot)
6. Abdur Rahīm Bismil (Ferozapore)
7. Kazim Husain Barq (Batala)
8. Bismil (Amritsar)
9. Mir Ghulam Bhik Nairang, B.A. LL.B, M.L.A (Ambala)
10. Khwaja Dil Muhammad, M.A (Lahore)

- II. Chaudrī Khushī Muhammad Nāzar, B.A. (Alig) - Gujrat.
- I2. Khān Ahmad Husain Khān, B.A.P.C.S (Retired) - Lahore.
- I3. Sayyid Razi-ud-Dīn Kaifī (Hyderabad)
- I4. Pandit Brij Narāin Datātaria, Kaifī (Delhi)
- I5. Allah Yār Jogī (Lahore)
- I6. Ghulam Muhammad Tūr, M.A. (Sialkot)
- I7. Agha Hashr Kāshmīri (Amritsar)
- I8. Agha Shāir (Delhi). Had started to versify the Quran.
- I9. Sayyid Benazir Shāh (Allahabad)
- I20. Abdul Majid Sālik, B.A. (Batala)
- I21. Khān Qalandar Āli Khān, B.A.LL.M. (Jhang)
- I22. Akbar Munir. M.A (Sialkot)
- I23. Zāhida Khātūn Shirwānia (Bhikampur). She is the greatest woman poet of Urdu. Died young leaving a collection of poems entitled "Āina-e-Haram".

There are a number of other poets but I do not want to fill up the pages of the thesis with their names. Any anthology say "Ma'arif-i-Millat" of Ilyas Birni or the "Urdu Markaz" (Lahore) series will give their names and illustrative verses.

The "Milli" poetry flares up in all suddenness every now and then on any event of political importance. The press welcomes such verses to appeal to the sentiments of the masses it pushes their sale, and the poets find it an easy way to recognition. The "Balqan Wars", "The Tripoli War", "The Cawnpore Incident", the internment or imprisonment of political leaders, "The Hijrat Movement", the "Shuddi Movement" and the "Tabligh Movement", the Hindu-Muslim struggle for political rights all these are properly and fully utilised both by the press and the poets.

#### V.

Such has been the influence of Hali in a general way on the life and literature of his time. I now take the five chief

"Millī" poets who followed him. They are Ismā'īl of Meerut, Shibli Nūmānī, Chakbast, Akbar and Iqbāl.

Ismā'īl.

Ismā'īl, did not come within the orbit of Hali's influence except for a short time. His genius flowered even earlier than Hali's under the direct influence of English literature. Ismā'īl is par excellence the children's poet, and his graphic pictures of Indian sights and seasons, birds and animals, his translations from English and happy rendering of the moral tales from Aesop made him the founder of the juvenile poetry among the Urdu speaking people. But remote as his province is from Hali, even he, in at least two of his important poems fell completely under the spell of Hali. The works that best illustrate the dawn of social and religious purpose in him are "Jarīda-e-Ībrat" and "Kaifiyyat-i-Qilā-e-Akbarābād, mausūm ba Āṣār-i-Salaf." The first, a long poem, is a metrical picture of the Muslim society of his time. The point of attack here, as in the "Musaddas" of Hali is the narrow dogmatism of the Muslims in theology, poetry and philosophy. As often happens the poem had its origin in a chance sight—a fencing match which struck the poet as a worthless and unhappy survival. This gave him food for thought and led to the discomfiting conclusion how the entire life of the Muslim was dominated by formalism and conventionality. Poets, philosophers, teachers, theologians, physicians, the worldly-minded religious man, the religious leaders and the modern

educated Indians, all are set in the pillory. The poem makes a very pleasant reading on account of the occasional flashes of humour and the absence of an aggressive moral purpose.

The second poem, as its title shows, was inspired by the ruins of a great fort—one of the surest motifs for the release of elegaic verse in modern Urdu poetry. The style and the treatment are appropriate to the grandeur of the theme. As one reads the poem it appears as if a measure of the massiveness and solemnity of the scene has transferred itself to the diction and imagery of the poem.

It was a part of Hali's mission to bring home to his generation the greatness of their forbears compared with which their own life and ideals looked mean and revolting. The same note runs through this poem. It is a long survey of the glories of the Moghals followed by a noble exordium to rouse the Muslims from their indifference, and to achieve greatness in their new surroundings.

### Shibli.

The poetry of Shibli falls into two distinct parts. The earlier "milli" poetry was written to order for special occasions when he was a professor at Aligarh. The longest of these poems—Masnavi Subh-i-Ummid—deals with the rise and development of the Aligarh Movement. Like most poems of the kind it is built on a contrast between the hey-day of Islam and its decline and fall in India. Here are all the stock themes of the new communal poetry; the poets are denounced for their

conventionality, the theologians for their narrowness and bigotry, the philosophers for their adhesion to the out-of-date philosophy of the Neo-Platonism. The poem ends with a glowing account of the Aligarh Movement and the efforts of its founder in the cause of education and enlightenment. His other poems of this period, like "Tamāshā-e-Ībrat", "Qasīda-e-Urdu" and "Qasīda-e-Urdu" of 1893, are all in the popular "millī" vein.

In addition to these are a number of short poems, dealing with certain striking episodes in the life of some of the great heroes of early Islam (and some of the Middle Ages) illustrating their forbearance, piety, self-sacrifice, spirit of and belief in equality, moral courage etc. Their relation with the poetry of Hali is obvious.

The second part of his verse which he wrote later on in life is mainly political, dealing with the Balqan War, the Muslim League, the proposed Muslim University, the Partition of Bengal, the Cawnpore Mosque Tragedy, etc. The distrust of the West which began with Hali reached its height with Akbar and Iqbāl is very pronounced in Shibli. Shibli's method in the political verse, for the most part, is ironic, and is traceable to the influence of Hali. His poems "Muslim League", "Shughl-i-Takfīr", "Sāl Bhar Hazrat-i-Wālā ko Koī Kām bhī Hai" and "Mujhe to khū hai kih jo kuchh kaho baja kahye" are instances in the case.

Brij Narāin Chakbast, B.A.LL.B.

While Chakbast was studying for his B.A. in the Canning College, Lucknow, Asia was passing through a great crisis. The

crushing sense of inferiority brought home to the East by the advancing tide of European conquest in Asia was suddenly arrested and lifted by the brilliant victory of Japan over Russia. The spell of the West was for the first time broken. A strong wave of national feeling ran over India and led to rich harvest of patriotic verse.

The poetry of Chakbast is the expression of this national sentiment. Significant in this connection is the title of his collected poems-"Subh-i-Watan"-(Dawn of Nationalism). Chakbast has the gift of a sweet pensiveness alternating with moods of over-exultation, which makes his poetry so faithful a mirror of the state of the Indian mind when it was written.

It would be absurd to trace these poems of Chakbast to the influence of Hali. There is one poem, however, which at once reminds one of Hali. It is an early poem, entitled "Muraqqa-e-Ibrat", in which he depicts in gloomy notes the picture of his society. He arraigns the rising generation for its sloth and ignorance, vindicates riches, exposes the narrow religions of his countrymen and ends by defining religion as nothing but the love of mankind.

#### Akbar Husain Akbar of Allahabad.

At first sight Akbar strikes one as a dogged reactionary who cuts across the pageant of modern India, ridiculing its pretensions, sneering at its cheap ideals and exhorting it to go back to the Middle Ages. With something of Tolstoy's, Shaw's and Chesterton's distrust of modernism he has dealt a heavy blow at the optimistic twitter of those who find Asia's

salvation in the imitation of Europe. And for this reason he has been pretty hard on Sir Sayyid.

But a mere reactionary Akbar is not. With a deep-seated mistrust of mere material progress, his programme, both as a poet and as a thinker, was to make progress more real by subjecting it to moral ideals. No doubt his zeal for smashing idols and shams sometimes gets the better of him, and he denounces merely out of prejudice. But if you follow his long crusade against the craze for modernism his position as a constructive thinker will be readily acknowledged. Hence his poetry is not the poetry of mere opposition. He is in harmony with all that is great or good in his times. Only he does not believe that the schools, colleges, a favourable exchange rate standing armies and warships are the constituents of a great civilisation. He judges men and institutions not by what they have, but by what they are, that is, by moral and not merely material standards.

Another factor which lends some colour to Akbar being considered as out of date is his interest in mysticism. Mysticism though certainly out of court at present is not quite a thing of the past in modern poetry. Iqbal dabbled in it tentatively before he found himself, and though he slashed it with a will in his "Secrets of Self", his admiration for the greatest of the Persian mystics has something of the mystery of a brilliant though unexplained paradox.<sup>1</sup> Akbar, as his

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 I. Iqbal is not against mysticism as such. In fact he is a strong protagonist of Higher Mysticism which he considers to be the salient feature of Islam. He is against that enervating Neo-Platonism (next page please)

correspondence shows, was all his life interested in mysticism and he vented his displeasure on Iqbāl when the latter roughly handled Hāfiz and others in his "Secrets". The mysticism of Akbar, however, was not quite the mysticism of the old school. As he maintains in his letters, it is quite compatible with a worldly life. Akbar's mysticism was mainly a distrust of rational processes.<sup>1</sup> Against the aggressive rationalism of some of his contemporaries he wished to draw a line between the province of religion and demonstrable knowledge and to show that religion was merely a matter of faith, and the ultimate problems of life could not be solved with the help of reason alone. Moreover, Akbar was driven to take refuge in mysticism by the excessive worldliness of his times. Mysticism as he understood it, was not a negation of life. Like the muscular Christianity of Charles Kingsley he strongly interpenetrated it with the acceptance of the world.

Iqbāl (Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbāl, M.A., Ph.D. Kt.)

It is obviously impossible to do justice to the poetry of Iqbāl in a paragraph or two. Iqbāl's genius matured under a multiplicity of influences—English literature, European philosophy (especially that of Bergeson and Nietsche) and the study of Islamic history and thought. He was also strongly influenced by the trend of events in Europe and Asia. It is therefore well-nigh impossible to disentangle the medley of influences and to trace them each to its source. In the

(From last page):nic mysticism which invaded Persian poetry later on.

I. Here Iqbāl is one with him.

following lines I shall simply set down my conclusions of the influences which he experienced.

Some of the longer poems of Iqbal, as "Nāla-e-Yatīm", "Faryād-i-Ummat", "Shikwa" and "Jawāb-i-Shikwa" etc were written under the direct influence of Hali. These poems written for special occasions echo the sentiments popularised by Hali. Most of them, as for instance "Dīn-o-Dunyā", "Islamia College ka Khitāb Panjab ke Musalmanon ko", do not ring true, the poet having written to order.

In his early poems Iqbal reveals a glad responsiveness to the world of nature and humanity. There is a strong note of patriotism also. But after his return from Europe he underwent two changes. His poetry which was already strongly leavened with philosophy is now almost overpowered by it. The second is the abnormal growth of the religious sentiment which crowds out all other interests from his life. He forswears his interest in Nationalism as a boyish freak, and henceforth he is the exponent of Pan-Islamism. This change of attitude is due to a number of causes: (a) Study of Hindu and Muslim relations in India. (b) The steady encroachment of the West on Islam in Persia, Africa and elsewhere. (c) The study of Islam and its creed of universal brotherhood.

The message of Iqbal is the same as that of the modern science: that there is practically no end to the upward development of mankind. This philosophy is partly a temperamental reaction against the ascetic and fatalistic theories of

life current in Asia, and partly due to his studies in modern philosophy and science. That it is wholly due to the study of Islam, as the poet is never tired of repeating, is a mere after-thought. In its essence the philosophy of Iqbāl is not derivative, although, by his wide readings in religion and philosophy he refined and elaborated it. Iqbāl and some of his followers have given a wide currency to the idea that he is in advance of his times. With regard to his Pan-Islamic dreams he is no doubt in advance of his times indeed, but only so far as India goes, for he was anticipated by Jamāl-ud-Dīn Afghānī and others in Persia and Turkey. But his philosophy of action is nothing but the plain common sense counsel of Hali elaborated into a philosophic system.

## VI.

Hali's nature poetry did not acquire popularity till the beginning of the present century when the new generation became adolescent. It found a chance of expressing itself in the newly founded literary magazine, "Makhzan", edited by Shaikh Abdul Qādir. Almost simultaneously appeared "Zamāna" from Cawnpore under the editorship of Dayā Narāin Nigam. The young poets who wrote for these magazines had a fervid enthusiasm for nature verse. The influence of Hali is limited to the liberation of their minds and showing them the new path. It is also reflected in their sincerity and in most cases in their diction. Notable among them are Salīm, Iqbāl, Ghulām Ahmad Ahmadi, Nādir Kākorwī, Sarūr, Shauq Qidwāī, Nairang, Sādiq Alī Khān, Nazīr Husain of Ambala, Mehrūm, Humāyūn,

Piāre Lāl Shākar, Rāzī-ud-Dīn Kaifī, Brij Narāin Kaifī and Melā Rām Wafā. The poems of most of these poets are merely descriptive lines on some natural object-some flower, bird, animal, season, river or mountain- with a strong leaven of ethics or sentimentalism. Excluding a few they seldom achieve a style: the communication is inoperative and the experience communicated is not very significant. Iqbāl towers head and shoulders above the others and is really great. In Salīm, Sarūr Nādir, Shākar and Shauq Qidwāi there is a real strain of poetry and some of their poems can find an honourable place in a good anthology.

None of them is a poet of nature in the real sense of the word. We do come across a few pure nature pieces, as the "Cloud" of Iqbāl, but they are of the nature of exceptions. These poets have not had any opportunity to study nature for themselves nor have they ever been in contact with her to develop a sincere passion for her. The reader therefore does not find that minute study and description of nature which he notices, say in Tennyson, or that warm adoration which is the salient feature of Wordsworth. They pretend to be in love with nature and this, coupled with the entire ignorance (in most cases) of the true significance of art, reduces their verses to mere collocation of high-sounding words and laudatory epithets.

Eastern poetry has always been centred in man. We cannot think of anything except in terms of man in general or in relation to ourselves. This is a feature even of the modern

nature poetry. Almost all the poets I have mentioned become introspective. They begin to ruminate about themselves and man\_pensive and sad ruminations, except in the case of Iqbāl. Hali was the first to employ it in his "Barkha Rut" with a pleasing relief, for his work is oppressively intellectual. The poets that followed him both used and misused\_and very often misused\_this note. Their personality invariably intrudes itself in the last stanzas of their poems and in many cases the poem begins straight with it. In poets like Iqbāl this subjectivity is thoroughly sincere. He has a contemplative trend of mind and his cultural background is entirely of a philosophic cast. But in others it is, as a rule, imitative and their poems not being the outcome of some emotional disturbance or compulsive experience fall flat on the reader.

## VII.

Hali enriched the contents of the ghazal by throwing open all themes to it. This innovation has been generally followed by nearly all the poets in the Panjab and by a few in the United Provinces. The more important of these poets are Salīm, Iqbāl, Nairang, Ijāz Husain, Chakbast, Hasrat, Wahshat, Aziz, Yas-o-Yagana, Jigar, Tajwar, Fānī, Suhail and Asghar. Hasrat was the first to dispense with the "radīf" in some of his ghazals and Iqbāl has almost completely discarded it in his "Bāl-i-Jibrīl." Here and in the continuous treatment of one subject in each ghazal the influence of Hali is likely to prove very wholesome. But the old conventions are far from having die

out and much of the poetry in the United Provinces and some in the Panjab is still true to the old traditions.<sup>1</sup>

In the other forms the influence of Hali is discernible in the great popularity of "Musaddas", "Qitá" and "Tarkīb Band".

#### VIII.

In the Introduction to his Diwan Hali writes a paragraph about poetic diction that goes to the heart of the matter. One moment of vision, he writes, may change one's entire outlook on life; but language, which is essentially a social product and has its roots deep in the past, is not so easily susceptible of change. It must take time, and therefore your new consciousness must for the nonce make the best of the soiled and debased currency in hand. This is what Hali did. He carefully winnowed the poetic diction of the banalities and chose the solid core as his medium for expression. Hali's example was generally followed by others, and we find very little of tasteless decorations affected by his predecessors in the new Urdu poetry. Of course individual tastes would out. Shibli, Sarūr, Salīm, Shākar and Nādir Kākori have a taste for a musical and more colourful diction. Again Ismāil, generally very simple, can rise with the occasion to a stately diction as in his "Akbarabad Form". But from the besetting sins of the Classical poetry they are as a rule free. It is only when we come to Iqbāl that the old diction and imagery once more invade poetry. He did not find the new diction, undeveloped as it was, adequate to his needs and took recourse to Ghalib's diction and style, gradually evolving one peculiar to himself. It is more colourful, pictorial and suggestive.

*1. please foot-note next page.*

Iqbāl has been severely criticised by some critics<sup>1</sup> for giving a new lease of life to the old words and images. It is ignored that Iqbal is simply following the advice of Hali, who while advocating the use of the ordinary speech of the people, insists at the same time on the retention of the old diction. The diction of Iqbāl acquired abnormal popularity in the Panjab and even invaded U.P.<sup>2</sup> The influence of Hali therefore became almost extinct. The imitators of Iqbāl found a sort of charm in his clitches and expression but their verses are mere commonplaces of thought clad in gaudy and pompous phraseology but without a spark of emotion. They differ from Naṣīr and Naṣikh only in the more colourful nature of their diction.

Although these poets still subsist there has ~~been~~ already been a reaction. The rising generation is out of concert with the tarnished vocabulary of the Classical School and they are fast enriching the language from indigenous sources. The name of the late Āzmat Ullah deserves a special mention. Ḥafīz is another poet many of whose poems abound in Hindi words and are master-pieces of lyrical verse. The influence of Hali is still there at work.

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Foot-note last page: Riāz, Muṣṭar, Bekhud, Sāil, Nūh Narvī, Ārzū, and others in U.P; Shams and Shād in Behar; and Kaifi in Hyderabad are the most important traditionalists of the present age. Riāz, Muṣṭar, Shams, Shād and Kaifi have since died.

1. Sayyid Muḥammad Laṭif.

2. See the Works of Waḥshat, Āzīz, Yās, Sīmāb, Jigar, Fānī, Aṣghar Sāghar and others. Most of them profess to follow Ghālīb but they have their cue from Iqbāl whose diction most of them employ.

## IX.

Literary criticism, as we know it, was almost unknown in Islamic and Indian literature. Hali was the first to introduce it in Urdu. No doubt we come across works as "Kitāb-ul-Ṣanāʿa Naqd-ul-Shīr" by Ibn-i-Qidāma, "Kitāb-ul-Umda" by Ibn-i-Rashīq, "Muqaddima" by Ibn-i-Khaldūn and "Kashf-ul-Ḥuḡūb alash-shīr-il-Mutanabbī" by Ismāʿīl bin Ibad Abul Qāsim, but only the first three discuss poetics at any considerable length. These too, though fairly advanced for their age and time, are not satisfactory and have all the defects which can be expected in treatises written without any comparative study of literature or the knowledge of the relation between fine arts and psychology.

The views of these writers were accepted as authority and in the course of time they brought about fixity of taste. The Persians made full use of these critical canons and enforced them with a rigour which surpassed that of the Arabs themselves. It seems that they never studied the subject for themselves; the brief notices of Nizāmi Urūzī, Aufī and Rizā Qulī Khān are the mere reiteration of the views of the Arabs. Shams-ud-Dīn Muhammad bin Qais Rāzi's "Mujam fi Maāsār-i-Ashār" is the most important.

Much the same was the state of literary history. It simply did not exist. The Arabs had their "Hamāsa", "Tabaqāt-i-Ibn-i-Qutaiba", "Wafayāt-ul-Ayān", "Kitāb-ul-Aghāni", "Yatīmat-ul-Dahr", "Damyat-ul-Qasr" and other books of the nature. But they were mere anthologies arranged according to alphabetical order

(in some cases chronological), with brief notes on the lives of the poets. The Persians were not amiss to follow suit. Abu Tāhir Al-Khātūnī of the Seljūq period wrote the first such "Tazkira", called "Manāqib-uḥ-Shuārā". Nizāmi-Uruzi's "Chahār Maqāla", Aūfi's "Lubāb-ul-Albāb", Rizā Qulī's "Majma'-u Fusaha" and some others were added from time to time.

The Indians who always took their spiritual and cultural inspiration from Persia could not but emulate them in this intellectual activity and produced a large number of such "Tazkiras" in a comparatively brief period. These are all arranged in alphabetical order and are the best useful for philological research. As literary history they have no value. As a rule they are rudimentary, sketchy and full of strange lapses. The writers give a full play to their idiosyncracies and seldom try to understand the mind of the artist. Caprice everywhere rules the judgment. As regards their worth as historical records or books of reference the opinion of Hali himself shall suffice:

"They (the Tazkira-writers) have never tried to investigate and find out the most essential facts about the lives of the poets. In most cases they have not cared to mention their dates of birth or death, their native town, place of residence, nationality, family, education or poetical discipleship. All the energy is directed to the selection of a few verses from the works of different poets according to their own taste. Pages upon pages are devoted to the meaningless and absurd praise or dispraise of the poets thus selected. This goes further to wrap up in mystery both the poets and their art."

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1. See Appendix X.

2. "Mazāmin-i-Hali", p. 140; Op. Cit.

Besides these "tazkiras" the only criticism one comes across of the nature preserved in the pages of the many pamphlets written in answer to Ghālib's "Qāṭi-e-Burhān". Other books of this kind are "Armughān"<sup>1</sup> by Khnayyā Lāl Alakhandārī\_a critic of Qutb-ud-Dīn Bātin's "Tazkira-e-Gulistān-i-Bekhizān", "Jalwa-e-Nairang-i-Ājīb"<sup>2</sup>\_a review of some Persian verses of Dabīr, in which the author, Muhammad Ali Hasan of Lucknow, seek to justify the use of certain phrases, expressions and grammatical constructions to which exception had been taken by a contributor to a local paper\_ and "Intikhab-i-Naqṣ"<sup>3</sup> by Abū Muhammad Abdul Ghafūr Khan\_a book of a similar nature as the last about the elegies of Anīs and Dabīr. Some of these pamphlets contain more invective than criticism: in fact criticism seems with them to be synonymous with abuse.

The first history of Urdu literature was the translation (with some additions) of Garcin de Tassy's "Lectures", by Dr. Fallon and Maulvi Karm-ud-Dīn in 1848. This was followed by Ab-i-Hayāt in 1881. It is the first original history of Urdu poetry with an introductory chapter on the growth of Urdu language which shows research, learning, insight and a scientific mind. But Āzād was essentially a conservative in his views, and a representative of the old school for which he had unbounded love as is clear from the concluding chapters of his book. His knowledge was limited to Persian poetics. "Criticism, in order to be methodical, implies previous metaphysics," and a thorough familiarity with the literatures of cognate cultures and the art epochs of the past. Āzād was sadly handicapped here  
 I & 2. Published Delhi & Lucknow respectively in 1875.  
 3. Cawnpore, 1879.

especially by his absence of the knowledge of the various theories of art and criticism.

Hali had a distinct superiority over him in these matters. His mind was always open to accept influences and thoroughly saturated as he was with Oriental learning, he made sincere efforts to learn the Western conception of art and criticism and their mutual relation and interaction. He was keen for the reform of Urdu literature and to be on solid ground acquainted himself with all that was possible for one placed in his circumstances. Having prepared himself for the task Hali launched the ~~campaign~~ by the publication of the "Muqaddima" the only book of its kind written in the Islamic world during the last several centuries. For Hali literature was indissolubely connected with life. His method, like that of Taine, laid emphasis on the milieu and the social environment. But unlike Taine he did not quite ignore the different selective propensities of individuals, their psychological make-up and the resistance they offer to their milieu. His contribution to Urdu literature was therefore great. With him started the modern critical prose in Urdu.

The book did not exert any noticeable influence on his contemporaries except in so far as it inspired Umrāo Mirza Hair of Delhi with his "Fann-i-Shā'irī". This was because Hali was too much in advance of his age as a critic. Much of the criticism that falls between the publication of Hali's critical works and the rise of the modern school of criticism is, therefore, old-fashioned, dealing with rules, precedents, lengthy squabbles.

over words, expressions, idioms, rhymes, figures of speech, grammatical constructions and the rejection or retention of stock verbal associations.

"Āb-i-Hayāt" which had appeared before the "Muqaddima" had a peculiar appeal on account of its style, and soon took the public fancy by storm. It was followed by "Jalwa-e-Khizar" of Farzand Ahmad Safir of Arra in 1835. He scrupulously followed Āzād in his style and idiosyncracies only instead of dividing the history in periods he prefers the parliamentary system of appointing so many Committees and Sub-Committees with their Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Secretaries and so on. This is not without its humour. This "Tazkira-writing" was a favourite pastime and its hold was too strong to be shaken.<sup>1</sup> The list given in the foot-note goes to point out the extent of its popularity. Of these "Khumkhāna-e-Jāwīd" of Sirī Rām is more important and has all the typical features of this kind of literature. As a matter of fact they go back to old "Tazkiras" and do not even follow Āb-i-Hayāt.

1. Tazkira-e-Khanda-e-Gul	Abdul Bari Asi-ul-Ladu
2. Tazkirat-ul-Khawātin.	do
3. Tazkira-e-Shamim-i-Sukhan	Abdul Hayy
4. Tazkira-e-Tabassum-i-Gul	
5. Tazkira-e-Kāmilān-i-Rampur	Ahmad Ali Khan Shauq
6. Darbār-i-Husain	Afzal Husain Sabit.
7. Āb-i-Baqa	Kh. Ishrat Husain.
8. Intikhāb-i-Zarrin.	Dr. Ross Masud.
9. Khumkhāna-e-Jāwīd (IV. Vols, Incomplete)	Sirī Rām, M.A.
10. Kāshif-ul-Haqāiq	Imdād Imam Asar.
11. Shuāra-e-Aurangabad	Safdar Ali.
12. European Shuāra-e-Urdu	do
13. Ijaz-i-Sukhan	Sarkhush.
14. Gul-i-Rānā	Abdul Hayy.

"Kashif-ul-Haqāiq" by Imdād Imām Asar deserves a special mention for it is different from all others, and in some ways superior to them. Asar adopts the chronological order but unfortunately mixes up the poets of India and Persia, thereby making a strange combination. He has selected some of the well known poets and discusses their poetry at some length. He has read English literature but his opinions about English poetry, as in the case of Paradise Lost which he compares unfavourably with Shahnama and the elegies of Anis, are so crude that sometimes they verge on the ridiculous. He discusses the different forms of poetry but his erudition is mere unassimilated knowledge. He gets muddled up in the subjective and the objective in art and applies his theories with results which are not always very happy. Conservative in his outlook he writes page after page in a hyperbolic strain on some verse which he says had sent him transports and a state of semi-stupefaction for days together, but which, strange to say, have very little emotional or poetical value.

That Hali failed to exert an immediate influence on his contemporaries is further clear from the long duel fought between Sharar and Chakbast on the latter's Introduction to "Gulzār-i-Nasīm" of Dayā Shankar, in which several writers took sides in the pages of Oudh Punch, Urdu-e-Mualla, Dilgudaz, Piām-i-Yār and Ittihād.

The influence of Hali, as a critic, began to work about two decades after the appearance of the "Muqaddima", when Mirza Sultān Ahmad wrote his "Fann-i-Shāiri". It bears remarkable

unmistakable impress of Hali although much of it is unacknowledged borrowing and translation from Western writers. Much later in 1926 Abdur Rahman of Delhi wrote "Mirat-ul-Shir" in which he discusses the subject at great length but is conservative in outlook and seeks to justify his views by relying on the authority of the "Ancients", particularly Arab writers. The book mainly aims at refuting Hali, although in certain places it merely borrows from him. The author lacks the essential qualities of a critic and some of his opinions are simply perverse. He is dogmatic and makes it a point not to understand.

It cannot be said that Shibli's Shir-u-Ajam was the product of Hali's critical writings but it cannot be denied that his discussion of poetry was much influenced by the study of "Muqaddima". Shibli has also adopted Hali's method in instituting comparisons between different poets by giving their "ham-tarah" ghazals.

Abdus Salam Nadvi in his "Shir-ul-Hind" slavishly follows his spiritual head, Shibli, but the ultimate source, for evident reasons, is Hali. The same is true, to more or less extent, of "Cul-i-Rana" by Abdul Hayy.

In "Yaḡar-i-Ghalib" Hali selected several verses of Ghalib under different heads-mystical, lyrical, philosophical, humorous, etc- and explained them with a view to illustrate these features of ~~the~~<sup>his</sup> poetry, of Ghalib. This method has been adopted by most of the later biographers, including Shibli,

and most of the present-day critical reviewers. The Introductions by Ihsān Ahmad to "Dāgh-i-Jigar"<sup>1</sup> and "Nishāt-i-Rūh"<sup>2</sup>, and by Iqbāl Ahmad Suhail to "Nishāt-i-Rūh" and "Bāqiat-i-Fāni"<sup>3</sup> are after Hali's commentary on Ghālib's verses only Hali does not fall a victim to subjective fancies, super-subtleties and Swinburnian impetuosity peculiar to Romantic criticism.

In a general way the "Muqaddima" is today one of the most read books in the Urdu-speaking world. There is hardly any writer who does not quote from it in support of his views. Sayyid Masūd-ul-Hasan Razwī in "Hamārī Shā'irī", Amīr Hasan Ulwī in "Urdu Shā'irī", Amjad Āli Ash-harī in "Eshyāi Shā'irī" and Sayyid Nazīr-ul-Hasan Fauq in "Al-Mizān" are instances in the case, although the three first mentioned are reactionary in their aim.

I have not referred to Salīm and Maulvī Ābdul Haq, for although both were profoundly influenced by Hali, their critical output is of a different nature.

To sum up: criticism in Urdu started with Hali's "Muqaddima". Supremely felicitous in his judgment Hali gave us the keys to chambers of literature and it is to his credit, that with all his learning he was, much like Hazlitt, not at all pedantic or academic. His critical writings helped to alter the course of Urdu literature. They are still an active force.

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1. The Diwan of Jigar Muradabadi.
  2. The Diwan of Asghar Husain Asghar of Gonda.
  3. The Diwan of Shāukāt Āli Khān Fāni of Badayun. See also the Introduction to it by Rashīd Ahmad Siddīqi of which the first part has been separately published as "Sarod ba Mastān".

Biography was not a new thing in Urdu when Hali took it up. It seems that after history it was the only other branch of literature popular in the masses. It served as a substitute of fiction much as did the hagiographies in the Middle Ages in Europe. Some of these biographical accounts, particularly the lives of the Prophet and the Imams were in metrical form.<sup>1</sup> Excluding a limited number all of them were translations from Persian. A few others were taken from Arabic sources. There were some translations from English of which the most important were Plutarch's Alexander the Great by Shiv Narāin (1847), Cicero by Motī Lāl (1847) and Demosthenes by Shiv Narāin (1848). They were soon followed by "Tazkirat-ul-Kāmilīn" by Ram Chandr (1849), "Tazkirat-ul-Mashāhīr" by Lālā Sadā Sukh of Allahabad (1854-56) and "Tazkirat-ul-Āqilīn" by M. Atmore Sherring all original sketches of eminent men mostly Western. These had been preceded by a small pamphlet on Sir Isaac Newton in 1841. The "Life of Prince Consort" (Tuzk-i-Germany) by Bishambar Nāth of Lucknow (1847) and the pamphlets on Nanak and Ramchandra (translated by Sūrāj Bhān in 1860 and 1869 respectively) and Alexander the Great (translated by Ayudhia Parshād in 1869) all originally written by R.N. Cust of Ludhiana Mission and "Sarguzāsh-i-Napoleon Bonaparte" by Mushtāq Husain (1871) are the only other translations from English that I have come across. None of these biographies seems to be of any literary merit except that of Napoleon. They did help the development of the language

as the vehicle of expression and deserve a mention for this, if for no other reason.

As regards the Persian translations<sup>La</sup>-they were in profusion and were mostly concerned with the lives of saints and martyrs. The centre of interest in these biographies is not the individual but the institution. The purpose is always ethical and theological. To criticism, psychological insight, the presentation of a character or even accuracy of fact-to these they have no pretension. The legendry, the supernatural and the miraculous are given a free latitude. The only ~~reasonable~~ readable books that I have come across in these translations are "Tuzk-i-Taimurī" by Subhān Bakhsh, Delhi, (1845) and "Hamalat-i-Haidarī", the biography of Haidar Ālī by Ghulam Muhammad son of Tipu Sultān (translated by Shaikh Ahmad Ali of Gopāmoi and published, Calcutta, 1949).

The inevitable result of these translations was the profusion of original hagiographies and martyrologies. It became a regular institution and the tradition is still flourishing. Their stock in trade is the usual gossip about portents and miracles.<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of these hagiographies appeared Hali's "Hayāt-Sādī" in 1881. No doubt he insisted on the utilitarian aspect of biography but, as already shown, his critical insight and his love of truth and actuality did not allow his theories to

1. Appendix XII.

2. Appendix XIII.

3. For English readers I can only refer to "Life of Eddius Stephanus" by Wilfrid, "Life of St: Guthlac" by Felix and "Life of St: Willibrord" by Alcuin as their parallel in English literature.

interfere in his method. He did not allow his emotions, reverential feelings or any motive of the expediency or the like, to blur his sincerity. His greatest contribution to biography was actuality and the introduction of conscious artistic purpose.

The effect of Hali's example\_ and particularly that of his Prefaces\_ was immediate. But unfortunately the writers that followed him attached more importance to his "Theophrastusian" theory of treating historical characters as ethical types. Shibli contemplated his "Royal Heroes of Islam" series and declared to write the life of one representative of each great Muslim dynasty.<sup>1</sup> He could not actually realise his ambitious object (though he did write quite a large number of biographies but his scheme was taken up by others, notably Qāzī Sirāj-ud-Dīn Ahmad, Umrāo Mirza Hairat, Abdul Halim Sharar, Maulvi Ahmad Din, Vakīl, Lahore, Abdur Razzaq of Cawnpore, Misbah-ud-Dīn Ahmad, Anjad Ali Ash-hari, Muhammad Yunas Farangi Mahli, Sulaiman Nadvi, Abdus Salam Nadvi, Saad Ahmad Ansari, Niāz Fatehpuri, Ahmad Husain of Allahabad, Mahbub Beg of Lahore, Ibad Ullah Akhtar, Hafiz Aslam Jirajpuri, Malik Muhammad Din

I. His programme included:

Khulafa-e-Rāshidīn

Omayyids

Abbasides

Omayyids of Spain

Seljuqs

Nuriyya

Muwahhids of Undulus.

Turkān-i-Rūm

Omar

Walid bin Abul Māl

Māmūn

Abdur Raḥmān Nāsir

Malik Shah

Nūr-ud-Dīn

Yāqūb bin Yūsuf

Sulaimān

Awān, Munshi Muhammad Latif, Farīd Ahmad Abbasi, Sīmah Akbarab  
 Wajāhat Husain, Abdul Hayy Wakil, Karam Ilāhī Soofī and others  
 The object of all of these writers is ethical. It still  
 prevails with the same persistency as it did in England in  
 England from Burnet and Halifax to Macaulay and Carlyle.

These writers believe with Carlyle that the "history of  
 mankind is the history of its greatmen" and very much in his  
 spirit are out "to find them out, clean their dirt from them,  
 and place them on their pedestals. Most of the subjects  
 selected by them are religious leaders or philosophers. Even  
 the kings have a halo of religious sanctity about them for in  
 Islam politics and religion are not apart, and kings, in spite  
 of all their worldliness are supposed to be the "Defenders of  
 Faith." Feelings of reverence and the attempt to set up an  
 ideal or plead a cause-these extraneous considerations naturally  
 go to mar their work,<sup>1</sup>

The direct influence of Hali on Urdu biography was the great  
 interest he created in it. There was a general demand for books  
 on the lives of great poets, writers, thinkers, religious  
 reformers, mystics and monarchs. The whole history of Islam was  
 ransacked so that no important figure escaped the enthusiasm  
 of these writers.

The influence of Hali has been therefore threefold: he made  
 biography immensely popular and under the impetus given by him  
 innumerable biographies were written: they were essentially

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I. This deification of heroes was more due to the influence of  
 Shibli than that of Hali.

based on his ethical and utilitarian theories: they all share, to a considerable degree, his synthetic and inductive method of treatment. It was also mainly the influence of Hali which cleared Urdu biography of supernaturalism. Hagiographies are being written even today, but they are very few and the intelligentsia does not take any interest in them.

## Conclusion.

The greatest influence of Hali on the literature of his country has been of an indirect nature. His great service to letters has been to raise the incubus of authority that weighed down on the poets. He showed them the way to sincerity and self-expression. From the moral point of view he raised poetry from a mere pastime to a great constructive force in society. It would be ridiculous to ferret out resemblances between Hali and his successors. They are akin to him because they all belong to the same age. Shibli, Salim, Chakbast, Akbar and Iqbal were surely stirred by the poetry of Hali; but to ascribe their themes and interests to Hali in a narrow sense is to misunderstand the processes of social and artistic evolution. The greater is the mind one comes in contact with the greater is the impulse for originality provided one has the right stuff such was Hali's influence. To this it may be added in a general way that he gave a great stimulus to communal and social verse, and I venture to say with Prof. Mathews, already quoted,<sup>1</sup> that without Hali Urdu literature today would be considerably different from what it is.

Answering the question, "What we mean by fame in literature" Matthew Arnold tells us:

"There are two kinds of authors whose fame is secure: the first being the Homers, Dantes, Shakespeares, the great abiding fountains of truth, whose praise is for ever and ever. But besides these sacred personages stand certain elect ones, less majestic yet to be recognised as of the

same family and character with the greatest, exercising like them an immortal function and like them inspiring a permanent interest. The fame of these also is assured. They will never, like the Shakespeares, command the homage of the multitude; but they are safe; the multitude will never trample them down."

To this latter class Hali belongs.

## Appendix I.

Some of the missionary literature produced before the Mutiny

- I. The New Testament: Prepared by Serampore Mission in 1811.
2. do do by Rev.H.Martyn of Serampore Mission, 1814.
3. Compendium to the Book of Common Prayer, published London, 1818.
4. Dāūd kī Kitāb (The Psalm of David), prepared by Serampore Mission, 1825.
5. The New Testament: Prepared by Calcutta Baptist Mission, 1844.
6. "Ibn-i-Haq kī Tehzīb": Written to meet some Muslim criticism; Revs. W.Smith and C.B.Leupp 1846.
7. Thoughts on the Existence of God: The translation of Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray's book in French, translated in English by G.C.Ravenshone. Urdu translation by Pandit Rām Kishan. 1846.
8. "Chashma-e-Zindgi": The Life of Christ by Rev. John Flavel, Allahabad, 1848.
9. History of Early Church: William Muir with the help of M.Ihsān Ullāh, Agra, 1848.
10. "Tariq-ul-Hidāyat": Rev.W.Smith, Mirzapur, 1850.
- II. "Mūsā Kī Kitāb" : Published by Allahabad Mission, 1850.

For other books see the main text.

## Appendix II.

A list of some of the important publications before the Mutiny:

Agriculture:

1. Khet Karam: Indian Agriculture by Kali Rai, Delhi, 1846
2. "Tausif-i-Ziraat": Kalb-i-Husain Khan, Agra, 1848
3. Pandnāma-e-Kāshkārān: Motī Lāl, Agra, 1852.
4. Silkworm and the Cultivation of Mulberry Trees : A translation of the book by Mōti Lāl, Lahore, 1853.
5. Gangā Ki Nehr: Lala Sadā Sukh, Agra, 1854.
6. Chāe lagāne ki Tarkīb: Lahore, 1854 (Author unknown).

Arts and Manufactures.

1. Bahr-i-Hikmat: Steam Engine, by Rev. Perkins, Lucknow, 1847.
2. Qānūn-i-Intiba (2 pts): Treatise on Printing by Sital Si Delhi, 1848.
3. Thomason Engineering College Papers, I. Material: Translated by Mannū Lāl, Agra, 1851.
4. Tuhfa-e-Naqqāshi: Elements of Drawing (2 pts): Translated by Lala Sadā Sukh, Allahabad, 1852.
5. Nūr-un-Nawāzar: Art of Perspective; Ahmad Ali, Cawnpore, 1854.
6. Tayyārī Sarak: Road Construction; H.D. Sademan, Allahabad 1854.
7. Bukhār ki Kal: Description of Steam Engine; Ishwar Lal, Benares, 1855.

Astronomy and Astrology:

1. Miftāh-ul-Aflāk : Translation of Ferguson's Elements of Astronomy: Abdus Salām, Calcutta, 1853.
2. Brief Account of Solar System: Calcutta. 1836.
3. Mukhtsar Ahwāl-i-Nizām-i-Shamsī: Lakhshmi Nārāin, Agra, 1840 .
4. Mukhtasar Haqāiq-i-Nujūm: R.S. Ghatali (Did), Madras, 1848.
5. Usūl-i-Īlm-Haiyat: Ayudhiā Parshad and Ram Chandra, Delhi 1848.

6. Khulāsa-e- Nizām-i-Shamsi: Pandit Bansi Dhar, Agra, 1852

Ethics.

1. Muntakhab-un-Nasāih: Translation from some English book, Calcutta, 1836. Author unknown.
2. "Larkon ka Durpan": Agra, 1846 Author unknown.
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## Appendix III.

The proportion of the Muslims and the other communities under education in the Panjab in 1872, Vide Letter No 95, dated, Lahore, 17th April, 1872. Punjab Government.

Name of Institution	H	M	others	total.
Colleges	91	6	5	102
Superior Schools	141	46	6	193
Middle	5,809	2,744	658	9,211
Inferior	23,074	16,445	3,727	43,246
Female	571	2,576	27	3,174
Jails	1,128	2,437	562	4,127
Normal	82	121	4	207
Total	30,896	24,475	4,989	6,0260.

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