

# The West in the South Asian Muslim Discourse: A Study of Indian Muslims' Travels to the West (1757-1857)

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During the reign of Muhammad Shah, some foreign adventurers, wonderful in their character and manners, appeared in the country, where they began to establish themselves, taking the advantage of Emperor's weakness, and of the universal discord amongst the nobels and the governors of the provinces. Strange things were said regarding this wonderful people, who, it was affirmed, had no skin, but a thin membrane covering their body, which made them appear abominably white. They were perfect in magical art, which made them successful in all their undertakings. They did not believe in our blessed prophet, and they called themselves Christians; but would not act upon the laws of sacred *Injil* (the Gospel of Jesus), which holy book they had changed in several places to serve their worldly purposes. Most of them still worshiped images, and they ate everything, and particularly things forbidden by the Holy Moses, and this in spite of the order of the sacred *Injil* (St. Matthews, v. 18 and 19); nay, they did not spare even human flesh when driven to an extremity. They had made three Gods for themselves instead of one – the only Omnipotent Supreme Being – contrary to their first commandment; and, most absurd of all, they attributed to the

Almighty God the having wife and children, and by the same token, they called their Prophet and themselves Son and children of God. Such reports were the topic of almost all conversations, and many other things were said against them, and only one in their favour- that they were not unjust; but in the administration of justice, they never deviated from the sacred book of the ancient law of Solomon, the son of David, etc.<sup>1</sup>

This is an extract from an autobiography of one of the early English writers of India in nineteenth century. It shows how elusive and intangible has been the concept of the West in the literary and scholarly discourse of South Asia during the past three centuries and how challenging it is to reflect upon it objectively and impartially. Human perceptions, deep-rooted fixations, inherent inclinations and socio-political connotations have mystified the idea to the extent that the East and the West are being generally considered as two distinct and opposing entities and studied either from one end of the spectrum or the other.

In Urdu literary and academic discourse, this concept was emphasized greatly after the advent of modernity in South Asia and most probably was a rejoinder to the colonization and its political aftermath. However, the early encounter of the South Asian Muslims with the West appears to be somewhat different from that of the modern period. Leaving aside the scanty contact of Europe with the Mughal Court during and after Akbar's regime (1556-1605), this study focuses on the period when the British penetrated deeply into the whole Subcontinent as a major political and military power and finally seized the Muslim supremacy in the Subcontinent.

Western nations entered India in the late sixteenth century resulting in the early encounters of the 'East' and the 'West' in political, social and religious spheres. Portuguese traveller Vasco de Gama (1460-1524) was the first who explored the ocean route

from Portugal to East India in May 1498. He wrote interesting and elaborated accounts of his discoveries in

his diaries which have been published and translated into many languages.<sup>2</sup> The tradition of writing about India and the experiences and images of the western people continued in the seventeenth century. For example, Sir Thomas Herbert's *Some Years' Travels into Diverse Parts of Asia and Afrique* (London: 1638) gives a good account of the social and cultural milieu of the seventeenth century Asia. In the eighteenth century and afterwards, a series of such travelogues were written by travellers, explorers, military men, businessmen and scholars. These travelogues give us a view of India at the time from a stranger's perspective. But unfortunately, we do not find any equally elaborated account of the image and perception of the West and its social, cultural and political systems, as perceived by the people of India until late the eighteenth century.

Indians belonging to various regions, religions and ethnic groups visited Europe starting right from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Most of the early Indian visitors of Europe belonged to the lower middle stratum of the society. They were lascars and sailors, personal servants and slaves and wives of the European traders, ship captains and other military or court officials. Gradually merchants and traders, envoys and diplomats and scholars and students were also included in this group.<sup>3</sup> British records give us scanty information about their travels and activities in Britain. The records show that in these early days, the experiences of both, the Europeans and the Indians, stemmed from a different and less complex relationship. It was mainly a relationship of the employer and the employee, both trying to exploit each other in multiple ways. According to Michael Fisher's account, the cultural, religious and ethnic differences did not play any significant role and both sides took each other as a different entity but did not feel any enmity or ill will against each

other. If the Indians were demanding for higher wages, the Europeans were trying to get rid of them as soon as possible and on the other hand, if any European was being saved and guarded by an Indian servant while getting lost in a jungle, the *Sāhibs* would take them along to 'Home' and regard their services with appreciation and compensation.<sup>4</sup>

Having an Indian servant was a mark of supremacy and status in the British social circles at that time. Over time, the middle-class Britons imitated the aristocracy and it became a more common practice to hire exotic servants to establish themselves as the élite class. Among these servants and slaves who desired to get settled in Europe, many converted to Christianity and anglicised their name and dress. They married British women in the churches and adopted English ways and customs. It provided them with a good opportunity to emancipate and have basic social support to survive in the British society. Mostly, these conversions were a means to improve the economic conditions and not an outcome of any sort of conscious and serious thought. Some of these, however, did not accept to denounce their religion and its bindings. They managed to observe their dietary restrictions as per their religious affiliations and went back to their families in India after completing their professional assignments in the Britain. Though their original identities remained unknown and they were mentioned as the Indian artisans, workers, slaves, seamen, merchants or teachers in the British records, they belonged to various religious communities of India including Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Parsis.

Other than the servants and skilled labour, a number of Indian academics, intellectuals and language teachers also visited Europe in this period. Their service records, applications and assessment reports are a part of the history which shows how their demand in the British society decreased rapidly as the colonial control over India grew harder. However, we do not find any self-

representation of these Indians in the British society, nor are their views about the West or its social and economic order available to us.

How did these Indian Muslims build their image of the West with reference to their own declining society and government? Did they find the Western world threatening to their own individual, ethnic or religious identity and took the Western dominance as an assault on their faith? Were they able to realize and appreciate the best part of the Western civilization or not? Were they willing to accept the Western hegemony in the fields of military power, scientific knowledge, social discipline and efficiency or were trying to move the needles of the clock in the opposite direction and find solace in the restoration of the past? We do not have the answer of similar questions; all we know is how they were received or understood in the Western societies. To find the answers to all these questions from the perspective of the *other*, we have to wait until the last quarter of the eighteenth century

The term 'West' has not been used in this study in the popular meaning of the geographical entity of the whole Europe and the territories which are outside its geographical boundaries but share the culture and civilization in general. Muslim scholars knew the West through Spain and Greece from the very early period of their history. However, the history and geography of Europe was not commonly known to the South Asians until they had a direct encounter with some of the European nations in the early seventeenth century. For the South Asian Muslims of the eighteenth century, the concept of the West was limited to a few nations they came across during the course of history and all of them were usually called '*farangīs*'.<sup>5</sup> French and British contested long to get hold of trade in India until the eighteenth century and when the British succeeded in occupying the dominant place in India, only they were taken as representatives

of the West. Until the nineteenth century, for the South Asian common Muslims, the West general meant the Britain and British society and was considered the sole representative of the whole Western world. However, some of the intellectuals and scholars knew about the geographical boundaries of Europe and its nation states.<sup>6</sup> America, the New World has also been mentioned by them.<sup>7</sup> Some of them even knew the differences between the French and the German nations and make a good comparison of both.<sup>8</sup>

### **High Colonialism in India after 1757:**

Mughal Empire was facing a number of difficulties after the death of Alamgir (1618-1707). East India Company gradually shifted its role from a trading company to the representative of the British government and by the advent of the nineteenth century, held control over a large part of India. This was the time when colonial attitudes created a widening gulf between the natives and the British officers of the company. Even the directors of the company strongly disapproved the direct access of Indians to the British government, king and members of the parliament. They not only discouraged but employed their full force to keep the number of Indian visitors as low as possible. On the other hand, the Indians were intelligent enough to comprehend that the corruption, lack of integrity and illegal and undue interferences of the company in Indian internal affairs should be reported to the British Government. They hoped to get justice from the British court and parliament as compared to the officials of the East India Company. They not only contacted the members of the parliament but in some cases, raised voice with the help of general public or media and created a strong opposition and criticism against the company. Sometimes, the directors of the company had to explain their position and pay compensation to the grieved parties. To avoid this embarrassment the company was strict in allowing the Indians to visit Britain and once they reached there, was very keen

to push them back. The directors were always ready to pay them the expenses of the journeys back to India. (Fisher 2004: 297) These Indian travellers belonged to various groups and social classes, and had multiple objectives. Some of them were from the Indian Royalty, who wanted to protest against the annexation of their states or resist against the colonial control over their territories. Some of them were just seeking to enhance their pensions, and some wanted enthronement for themselves or their patrons. Many Indian deposed rulers sent their representatives or legal advisors to Britain when they themselves were stopped to travel.

As colonialism held its control tight over India, a number of Indian delegations visited Britain with varied objectives. Most of these delegations were composed of the noblemen or claimants to rule who had lost their kingdoms as a result of British policies, conspiracies of the rivals under the secret supervision of the British residents or any other reasons. Until the late eighteenth century, not only the noblemen or the rulers of the small kingdoms, but the Indian emperor himself looked up to the British to save his rule from the rebels. Apart from the diplomatic missions and envoys, going to Europe with political objectives, there were a number of common people who visited Europe either for academic purposes, or with a spirit of true wanderers or tourists. Linguists, scholars of Persian, Hindustani, Sanskrit and other native languages, academics, trainers of rare animals or the employees of the East India Company embarked upon the journey toward Europe in search of knowledge, direct experience and good opportunities. All these people brought with them a sophisticated comprehension of western societies, their constitutional and political bodies, their socio-cultural values, customs and traditions, their scientific discoveries, their industrial and commercial developments and their national and individual aspirations and commitments. Most of them had a chance to spend some time in France on their way to Britain and thus were

able to compare the two societies in depth. They not only compared the prices of the commodities, but also evaluated the efficiency, skill and training of the people in both countries.

### **Early records of the Indian Muslims'**

#### **Perception of the West:**

We do not find any particular records of the early travellers to Europe; and their views about the West remain unknown to us. But in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a reasonable number of travel narratives were produced which reflected upon their perception of the West in a logical and analytical way. Most of these narratives were written by Muslims but surprisingly the writers used different languages to narrate their experiences. These languages included Persian, Arabic and English. At least three narratives in varied forms have been discovered until now which were written as a result of travels to Europe in the late eighteenth century and another five were written until 1857, out of which three were in Urdu, followed by a series of Urdu travel narratives after 1857.

Usually Mīrza P'tisām al Din's *Shagurf Nāma-i Vilāyat* (1785) is considered the first travelogue of the Europe and Britain, written in India. But the research has proved that the first travelogue was written in 1773 by Munshī Ismā'il, a Persian teacher from Bengal. Mīrza P'tisām al-Dīn visited Europe from January 1766 to November 1769. He took notes for his memoirs but could not compile his travelogue until 1785. Munshī Ismā'il, however, reached England in June 1772 and stayed there till March 1773. His accounts prove that he compiled his travelogue *Tārīkh-i Jadīd (The New History)* during his travels and it was completed around November 1773 soon after his return to India. The text of this narrative was copied by Ghulām Hassan, a resident of the port of Huglī,<sup>9</sup> who also gave the name of the



author at the beginning (MS. f. 9a).

The original as well the copied manuscript remained unknown until 1968 when Simon Digby<sup>10</sup> (1932-2010) acquired the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps and discovered the manuscript which had entered the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps in 1856. Digby<sup>11</sup> writes:

"the conjecture that the manuscript was transcribed for James Grant is corroborated by the presence of another manuscript formerly in the Phillipps Collection [...]. This manuscript states in its colophon that it was copied for James Grant in AH 1199/1784/5. It came into the Phillipps Collection from the same provenance as Munshī Ismaʿīl's *Tārīkh-i Jadīd*, as both manuscripts bear pencilled annotations by Sir Thomas Phillipps." (DIGBY 1989: 65).

Munshī Ismaʿīl was a Bengali middle-class clerk who belonged to Ganjkalna, in the district of Burdwān (MS., ff. 11b, 20b). According to Gulfishān Khān's speculations, he, as well as ʿIṭisām al-Dīn both

[...] had somewhat similar social and professional backgrounds. They were Qasbah based Muslim service gentry whose ancestors would have served in the local administrative positions. Both were brought up in the semi-urban areas of the Bengal province [...]. Literary productions and professional concerns suggest that the families of ʿIṭisām al-Dīn as well as of Ismaʿīl had a fairly established tradition of gentility and learning. The financial bases of both their families seem to have been eroded, following the land-revenues settlements in Bengal after the British occupation of the province. Both were in search of livelihood which brought them into contact with the British.<sup>12</sup>

However, Simon Digby has a relatively different view about the social status of Munshī Ismaʿīl. He believes that Munshī Ismaʿīl was "the humblest of the three travellers."<sup>13</sup> He was brought

to England as the Munshī (Persian corresponding secretary and the Persian teacher) of a British servant of the East India Company in Bengal."<sup>14</sup> He further claims that:

From his narrative, it is evident that Munshī Ismaʿīl came from a family with pretensions to gentility and learning who held lands in rural Bengal, in the vicinity of Kalna, Burdwan District. This suggests that they may have been Sayyids of Shaikhzādes who had been long established there. (Ibid)

Both of the scholars have attempted to identify the social status and family background of Munshī Ismaʿīl but they had to rely on the information given in his account by himself. There is no evidence or basis of any authentic information about Munshī Ismaʿīl, available to us in the contemporary sources. Munshī Ismaʿīl, in his accounts, gives insufficient information about his family background. All we know from his narrative is that he was employed in Motī Jhīl by Mr Anderson, the in charge of the translation of the documents regarding the administration of the province of Bengal. He cherished this service for he had already suffered a lot from the famine in Bengal and had been in search of an employment since long. There, because of his literary faculties and linguistic skills, he earned good name and respect and was introduced to Mr Claude Russell, a member of the Council of Bengal,<sup>15</sup> who was looking for a suitable *munshī* (Persian secretary) to accompany him to England. Munshī Ismaʿīl accepted this offer after much reluctance. He did not want to go across the ocean and leave his father, half-brothers and other family members alone in India. However, Mr Russell and Mr Anderson insisted and persuaded him to accept the position and he, keeping in view his poor financial condition and the needs of his family, and of course in hope of receiving heavy rewards, accepted to join Mr Russell as a *munshi*.

On December 3, 1771, they embarked on the East Indian ship Morse and reached the Cape of Good Hope after the voyage of

two months and twelve days. After twelve days stay and a visit to the places around, including gardens, orchards and fields, their ship moved forward and reached St. Helena. From here, Munshī Isma'īl and Russell embarked upon another ship bound for London (MS. f. 29b, 30a). During this trip, Munshī stayed in London and Bath and described the curiosities of the English life in multiple ways. His interaction with the people had been limited and he could not experience much of the life there. However, he recorded his observations in a simple and clear way. One of his very interesting observations is that of the coffee houses which played the role of agents or informers of the government at that time and used to collect information from their clients all the day and send it to the government in the evening (MS. f. 42a-43b). He was also very impressed by the signs of general prosperity and economic stability (MS. f. 44a-b). He could not view the class difference in the society, neither did he was able to analyse the deeper layers of the social system prevailing in the Britain at that time. All he could do was describing the brightly lit streets, solid bridges over the rivers, amazing parks with the pretty ladies walking in and enormous flowers of the rainbow colours (MS. ff. 44a-47b). However, he got familiar with the concept of democracy for the first time which seemed to him a very strange but productive concept and he really liked it. He was much fascinated by the political system of England and in his own naïve manner praises the role of the House of Lords and the House of Commons as follows:

As regards the exercise of sovereignty in the rule of the kingdom, to which pertain forcible, confiscation from subjects and their censure and public ignominy, it is the custom that in addition to the royal ministers a certain number of lords (*amīrān*) of high prestige and representatives (*wukalā'*) of the landholders (*zamīndārān*) are in the royal presence. At a time when a deficiency occurs in the expenses of the king and there is need for more than an annual sum of money which is fixed, an order is

issued to these lords and representatives. The two bodies accept the royal order in accordance with its words and intent and with inquiry into its necessity and inevitability: and they replenish the treasury of the state, having gathered from the landholders the taxes which are required. So, the degrees of the punishment and exaction which have been alluded to above are not brought into operation, nor the forbidden pattern of confiscation and violence without representation. The peasantry (ra'āyā) of the kingdom do[es] not suffer from the oppression and blows of the landholder. According to the law of the king, every man is himself free, but without power over others. A balanced connection has become established whereby the king fears the ministers, the landholders the peasantry, and the populace the law. Through the interposition of this moderating chain of behaviour, each man is accountable and none causes pain or injury [ to others] <sup>16</sup> .

*Shigurf Nāma-i Vilāyat* (1785) is the travelogue by Mīrza Shaikh ʾtisām al-Dīn (1730- 1800) who visited Europe as an envoy of the Mughal king in 1767 and returned to Bengal in 1769. He was sent by the Mughal Emperor Shāh ʾĀlam II (r. 1759-1806) who was in the British custody temporarily after the Buxar war in 1764. The king, after the Buxar war, sought help from the Commander in Chief of India, Lieutenant General Robert Clive (1725-1774) to return to his capital safely as was agreed upon by the two, but Lord Clive refused to do so without the permission of the King George III (r. 1760-1820). The Indian emperor Shāh ʾĀlam wrote a letter <sup>17</sup> to King George III (1760-1820) requesting him to allow his army to escort the emperor to his capital in Delhi. A British Captain Archibald Swinton (1731-1804), a former employee of the East India Company, who had resigned from his position to fulfil this responsibility, was appointed by Lord Clive to take this letter to England. The emperor also sent a *nazr* (gift) of 100,000 rupees, along with other gifts, to the King as was customary in Mughal court traditions. Shaikh ʾtisām al-Dīn, a trained scholar and official of the Navāb of Bengal and the East

India Company's administrative office in Bengal, was appointed to accompany Captain Swinton as an Indian representative. It is interesting to note the colonial oppression and the Company's high officials' deceitful attitude toward the Indian royalty which became quite obvious right from the middle of eighteenth century and reached to its height in the next hundred years, resulting in the war of 1857. Lord Clive, deceiving the emperor, prevented this envoy from approaching the King. I'tisām al-Dīn was betrayed by Captain Swinton and was told that the Emperor's letter and gifts will be delivered later by Clive himself. He waited there for the promised visit of Clive for almost two years and came back unsuccessful without completing his mission. Later when Clive reached England, he presented the gifts sent by the Indian emperor to King George on his own behalf and won the King's favours for himself in return. However, this trip produced an important travel narrative of Europe by a South Asian Muslim written in Persian. Though the original complete Persian text never got published, it was translated thrice into English<sup>18</sup> and Urdu.<sup>19</sup> It is worth mentioning that the English translations, particularly the first one, are abridged ones and usually omit the parts where the author has criticized the western society. This can become the subject of another study.

This narrative gives a very interesting account of Mīrza's experiences during his first ever sea voyage and his keen observations of the western socio-cultural milieu. He has given his views in an objective and balanced tone and has voiced all his apprehensions and conclusions clearly, confidently and logically. He gives interesting information about England as well as Scotland, France, Holland, Rome and America (I'tisām Al-Dīn 1995: 36, 68, 71, 75, 117). He talks of the political system, judiciary, military power, education, media and social and moral state of the European countries (*ibid*: 53, 59, 95-112, 121-136). Although his geographical terminology is mostly derived from the Asian concept of the globe, he tries to make his readers

comprehend the western geographical division vividly (*ibid*: 71-5). He appreciates the industrial and educational developments, social welfare institutions, scientific discoveries and freedom of thought and expression, but also mentions examples of class differences, inequality, forgery and smuggling (*ibid*: 41, 50, 70, 108). He is surprised to know that the rich and poor are buried in different places in England. He also explains the doctrine of Christianity and gives his arguments regarding Trinity, miracles, the role of the priests and other religious constructs. He explains and appreciates the Christian doctrines and principles and compares these with those of Islam, which he believes is the best religion (*ibid*: 77-88). Mīrza P'tisām al-Dīn's *Shigurf Nama* is a lucid depiction of the image of the West by a middle class educated Indian Muslim.

Another notable travel was that of Mīr Muhammad Hussain (d. 1790), a worthy and accomplished scholar of Persian descent. He served in Avadh and later in Murshidabad and Calcutta. He was a learned medical doctor and a serious scholar of various disciplines of his time including astrology, astronomy, geography and poetry<sup>20</sup>. His profound interest in science and intellectual pursuits led him to Europe in 1775-6 in the company of his British friend Elliot. There he learnt English to the level of proficiency and translated a book from English into Persian. On his return, he wrote a brief journal *Risālah-i Ahvāl-i Mulk-i Farang-u Hindūstān*<sup>21</sup> in response to the enquiry made by one of his learned friends about his observations and experiences in Europe. He wrote it in Arabic and afterwards translated it into Persian at the request of his friends.<sup>22</sup> This journal never got published until 2010 when Mahmūd Ahmad Barakāti wrote a detailed introduction to the book and published it with its Urdu Translation under the title *Mushāhidāt-i Farang*.<sup>23</sup>

This narrative gives a serious, well thought and intellectual commentary on the West and its academic, scientific and

intellectual ambiance. It admits the author's will and wish to explore the new ideas, theories and philosophies of the European scholars and intellectuals. He praises Europe for its 300 years long advancements in the world of science and knowledge (*Mushāhidāt* 2010: 227). He comments with astonishment and appreciation on the scientific discoveries that have literally "changed the world" and "moved the earth and the heavens" (*ibid*). The author also informs his readers about the historical as well as geographical facts about Europe. He mentions fourteen nations living in the continent; all Christian, but of different sects (*ibid*: 228). However, he believes that English people are more skilful in knowledge and practices both (*ibid*). He highly appreciates the European's interest in multiple languages including the classical languages, printing of books and dissemination of knowledge and their rationalism, scientific approach towards the man and the universe, research in Physics, Arithmetic and Logic (*ibid*: 229). He explains briefly the differences of Catholic and Protestant beliefs and praises the Protestantism for liberating the mankind from the religious extremism. Before discussing Astrology, he also explains the discovery of the new world called America and gives the detail of this venture in a very appreciative and positive manner (*ibid*: 223-4). Mīr Muhammad Hussain also admires the translation of the Quran by George Sale (1697-1736) and pays his homage to the translator for implying an unbiased approach and giving references from the most authentic but difficult commentaries of the Quran (*ibid*: 229).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, another wonderful travel narrative *Musīr-i Tālibī* was produced by a prolific writer of the age Mīrza Abu Tālib Isfahanī (1752-1806). He was born in an influential family of Lucknow and was educated there under the guidance of the best teachers and scholars of his time. Abu Tālib left Lucknow for Murshidebad in 1766. He returned to Avadh in 1775 and was appointed the

Revenue officer of Etawah and adjoining districts but was forced to leave Lucknow in 1787 after the death of his patron. He went to Calcutta and appealed to the Governor General but nothing proved fruitful. While staying in Calcutta and facing unemployment and economic problems, he authored many books<sup>24</sup> and composed poetry. There, his old friend, Devid Thomas Richardson advised him to visit England. This trip was undertaken during 1799-1803 and he wrote a detailed account of his visit in the form of a book. The first available manuscript of the accounts of Abū Tālib's travel carries the date 1806 under the title *Musir-i Tālibi*. The book was first published in abridged form by his sons in 1812 and gained much popularity<sup>25</sup>. It was translated into English, French, German and Urdu soon after its publication.<sup>26</sup>

For his journey to Britain, he embarked on a Danish ship from Calcutta bound for Cork, Ireland. On his way, he suffered a lot because of the bad conditions at the ship and mismanagement of its American Captain throughout the journey (Safarnama-e-Farang1999: 33-4). He was highly displeased with the arrangements of his journey and consequently his description of the events, places and things lacks excitement and sense of amusement. Rather, he talks of his observations in a more academic tone. He took a land route for his return journey and passed through many countries and cities including Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Genoa, Leghorn, Malta, Istanbul, Anatolia, Musal, Baghdad, Basra and Bombay which gave his travel accounts a wide range of comparison between multiple societies and civilizations.

In Britain, he visited Dublin, London, Windsor, Oxford and several other places, meeting his English friends and patrons. Abū Tālib, as a member of the aristocracy, got the opportunity to socialize with the upper class in Britain. He attended the drawing room of the King and the Queen and also met the important



personalities of the English elite (*ibid*: 110-1). During his journey, he also met important personalities like the Persian scholar Sir William Ouseley (1767- 1842) in England, the French Linguist and Orientalist Silvestre De Sacy (1758-1838) who translated some of his Persian poems into French (*ibid*:142-3, 262). Napoleon Bonaparte (1769- 1821) and the Prime Minister of France Charles Maurice de Talleyrand (1754-1838) also wished to see him and called for him during his visit to France but he could not do so because of his short stay in Paris (*ibid*: 262).

Abū Tālib, besides being a keen observer and a fond traveller, was a reformer and nationalist as well. He has commented on all the aspects of western society which he finds pivotal in the progress and development of the West. He discusses the education, social mannerism, democracy, constitutional reforms, economic progress and scientific and technological advancements in detail with the purpose of making a comparison between the Muslim and the Western societies. He seems very confident, straight forward and open minded in his accounts. He talks openly on the vices and virtues of the English. His account "thus remains one of the most comprehensive accounts of the West by an Indian Muslim" (Khan 1998: 100). Abū Tālib's narrative can be compared only with the first travel narrative written in Urdu by Yūsuf Khan Kambalposh (1803-61) under the title of *Tārīkh-i Yūsufī* published by Delhi College in 1847. However, when the second edition of the book was published by Naval Kishore, Lucknow in 1873,<sup>28</sup> the title was changed to *ʿAjāʾibāt-i Farang*, which gained much more popularity than the first title. Later it was edited and published three times in Pakistan.<sup>29</sup> It was never translated into English, though it was mentioned with appreciation in the contemporary sources. The news of his return from England was published in the Asiatic journal as follows:

#### **A Travelled Native**

Eusoph Khan, soubadhar of Lakhnow, who was on a visit to England, is now safely arrived at Calcutta. He expressed himself highly gratified with the kind treatment and hospitality he received from the nobility and gentry. His remark on English character is worthy of notice: "English men in this country and Englishmen at home are totally different in point of character." He intends to publish his diary, which will no doubt, be very interesting to our native readers, as it will contain accounts not only of England, but of every place he has visited, and of which he talks in terms of high admiration.<sup>29</sup>

Renowned French Orientalist Garcin de Tassy (1794-1878) also mentioned him in his 11<sup>th</sup> lecture<sup>30</sup> with reference to an issue of the Indian Mail<sup>31</sup> which gives contradictory statements about his origin and religion. Contemporary Urdu *tadhkirahs* also mention him as a poet and student of renowned Urdu poet of Lucknow Ātish (1778-1847).<sup>32</sup> Some parts of his travelogue were published in the journal of Delhi College.<sup>33</sup> It was also commented upon in another weekly literary journal of Delhi College, *Qiran al-Sa'idein*.<sup>34</sup>

Yūsuf Khan belonged to an Afghan family settled in Hyderabad. In search of employment at a young age, he reached Lucknow and was patronized by a British officer. There he joined Nasīr al-Dīn Hayder's cavalry as a Jamadār and rose up to the post of Sūbedār. He learnt English, read a number of books on history and geography of various nations and decided to embark upon a journey to Europe to have a direct experience of life there. He reached England in 1837, rented a shared house in London and explored all possible attractions and curiosities of the city. He wrote all his significant experiences in detail and expressed his views openly and without any fear or reluctance. While admiring the amicable social behaviour of the British, he does not hesitate in mentioning the arrogance of the British in India. He thinks the British who come to India seem to be another creation with

entirely different department. Those British, in his opinion, have altogether no match with the ones he met in Britain. *Āh nisbat khāk rā be ālam-i pāk*. “What relation has the dust with the pure world?” We can see the growing tension between the two nations in his remark and the same is reflected in the narratives of his predecessors. His travel account was written in Urdu which in itself suggests the declining power of the Mughal Empire and the growing language politics in India.

This tradition rooted down rapidly and two more travel accounts were written in Urdu before 1857. Navāb Karīm Khān (b. 1811) went to England in 1840 as a representative of the Mughal king and legal agent of the Navāb of Jhijhar to defend his case as the legitimate heir of the state. He kept his daily diary in Urdu and wrote the accounts of his journey every day. It was edited and published by Dr. Ibādat Barelvī in 1982<sup>35</sup> for the first time, however a part of it was translated into French by the French scholar Garcin de Tassy<sup>36</sup>. Karim Khan with his envoy arrived in London in 1840 and stayed there for almost two years. Though he failed in his mission like many others, the way he summarised the outcome of his experiences in a bitter tone is very different from that of the others. He states his doubts about getting justice from the British without bribing them in a harsh tone:

Let it be known that it will amount to sheer meaningless trouble for the powerless to come to England to plead their case and seek justice. If any pain-filled heart thinks: ‘I will go there, submitting myself to such distant travel abroad, then perhaps they will show me mercy’, this is an absolutely wrong idea. These people with whom you must deal here have neither fear of God nor mercy in their hearts. Your very indigence and need will prevent your gaining access to their favour. But any powerful [Indian] is welcome to make this attempt, only provided that he brings 10,000,000 rupees cash and forty attendants who are proper companions, reliable supporters, civil and trustworthy

people. Then don't even mention your case for a year, but during this period prepare the ground work for your case using the money you brought [...]. Then if you have the grace of God, you may get a verdict within a year [...].<sup>37</sup>

Though his diary is full of appreciative remarks for the scenic panorama of London, one can easily identify the undertone of dislike. When an English gentleman suggests him to get married in Britain, he politely refuses by stating that an English lady would not accept him because he is a stranger in the country and being a gentleman, he does not approve to marry a woman of lower class (*SIYĀHAT NĀMA* 1982: 181). While discussing the flora and fauna of the land, he admires the colours and various kinds of flowers but does not refrain from mentioning that unlike the Indian flora, they lacked fragrance (*ibid*: 119). Similarly, he is pleased to see the fruits of different seasons and regions but misses the taste and sweetness of Indian fruit. He believes it's the soil that is incapable of producing the inner beauty and perfection (IBID). But he adores the museums, the theatres, the operas, the circus, the ship yards, the artillery and the business concerns called company (*ibid*: 126, 129, 133, 138-9, 171, 198 214, 278-9). However, it is worth mentioning that almost all Muslim travellers have observed the western development but they found its roots in the advancement of science and technology and discipline and hard work of the people. In contrast to it, the Pārsī travellers have focused on the commercial activities more than anything else; whereas the Hindu travellers were more concerned about the politics.<sup>38</sup>

Lutfullah (born 1802), a Persian teacher and the son of a great Sufi from Malwa, visited Europe in 1844. He was closely associated with British military officers and his contacts extended to great writers, historians, intellectuals and political office holders like the Governor of Bombay Mount Stuart Elphinston (1779-1859), the author of the *History of India*, (1841). Lutfullah

was a well read person who cited the romantic poets and lines of Shakespeare and Edward Gibbons' *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*. His autobiography includes the account of his travel to Europe and though he stayed there for only seven months, his narrative vividly describes his internalization of the Western culture. He writes in detail about his daily engagements and meetings and his views about his observations. He also gives a glimpse of the conflict between the patriotism and the blessings of the colonial rule in India. He remarks after his visit to East India House:

It's the place where the destiny of my sweet native land lies in the hands of twenty-four men, called the Honourable Directors of the Honourable East India Company, who are the principal movers of the strings of the machine of Government in India.<sup>38</sup>

The last narrative of the period under discussion was written by another petitioner and representative of the exiled king of Avadh, Wajid Ali Shah (1822-1887), who sent his mother and princes to Britain to gain favour for him in getting his throne back from the Company. He appointed Masīh al-Dīn Alvī (b. 1804) as his legal agent and representative. The envoy arrived in London in 1856 and enjoyed hospitality by the queen and the elites. They were received by the British aristocracy with respect and honour and had won great support from the public in favour of the king of Avadh but due to the immature and hasty decisions of the king of Avadh, and because of the Mutiny in India, the mission failed in achieving any success. However, Masīh al- Dīn Alvī wrote the account of the travel in his autobiography which was a part of his book *Tārīkh-i Inqlistān*. It was published separately under the title of *Safīr-i Avadh* in 1929.<sup>40</sup>

This is the first travel account which is simply devoid of any comments on the socio- cultural aspects of the West. It seems that the writer did not deem it necessary to mention his observations or just did not observe anything except his own busy engagements

about his political pursuits. He writes about the kindness of the queen and cordial reception they got by her time and again. He also praises the support of the public they gained there. He did not say a word about the life, education, political and industrial developments etc. Surprisingly, on his way back to India, he goes for the Mecca pilgrimage and passes through Egypt. There, he comments on the inns and lack of travelling facilities and compares them with the luxuries he enjoyed in Europe. However, he is the first author who has criticised the immature behaviour of the king and the princes of Avadh.

#### **The Perception of the West: Similarities and Differences:**

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed the transition of the subcontinent from a traditional medieval civilization to a developing modern society. It was the time when the British won the political and military supremacy and local aristocracy lost its influence, power, and significance. South Asian Muslims, who had ruled India for six centuries, were baffled and perplexed, before a power with a totally different world view and unbeatable war-tactics. They felt themselves incapacitated to resist the stormy waves of cumulative indigenous and non- indigenous changes occurring in their personal, social, and political milieu. In this context, we find these travel narratives as an index of the change occurring in the Muslim intelligentsia of the age.

All these travel accounts give an overall description of the general image they collected while travelling through Europe. The most common feature of these travellers is that they all are amazed at the illumination of the streets, the cleanliness of the cities, the civic facilities provided to the citizens, the town planning, the strong structure of the buildings, the ornamental displays of the shops and markets, the footpaths, the public parks and the amusement centres. They observe with interest and surprise, the technological advancements, industrial and

commercial activities and the discipline and skilfulness of the citizens. But they have their own individual responses to their similar observations. For example, Munshī Ismaʿīl was surprised to view that the houses are all built in five storeys, in line and of uniform design, which can be distinguished only with a small bronze plate with the name of the owner, neighbourhood and the number of the house inscribed on it (MS. f. 39b-40a). In the context of the industrial revolution, it is interesting to know how a visitor from a feudal society reflected upon the lack of individuality and variety from the growing industrial life. Mirza ʿĪtisām al-Dīn praisefully describes the structure of the historical building of St. Paul's Cathedral in London and laments that in India, there are not any strong and tall stone-built buildings (*SHIGURF NĀMA* 1995: 48-9). Of course, his opinion is based on his lack of information and perhaps he had never visited the capital city of India which had many signs of Mughal grandeur even after one hundred years of the last great emperor ʿĀlamgīr (d. 1707).

They all fondly narrated the wonders of *vilāyat* in their respective accounts. Their sense of awe and overwhelming admiration of the social order is an indication of their being deprived of such luxuries in their own land. In fact, they all belonged to the era of decline and chaos. However, their views about the West were not influenced by the Orientalists' theories and ideas. They had experienced the chaos and lawlessness in their home country and were conscious of the decay of the social systems in India. Almost all of the visitors were very conscious about their own image and none of them experienced or at least narrated any experience of prejudice or racial conflict. On the contrast, they expressed their pleasure over the reaction of the British to their exotic appearance. Mirza ʿĪtisām al-Dīn and Abū Tālib particularly seem more concerned about their native appearance and like to amuse the men, women and children with their traditional costumes and habits. They do not feel any

inferiority complex before their European hosts, nor do they hesitate in admitting their small misapprehensions creating a mirthful reaction.

I'tisām al-Dīn and Abū Tālib both are very confident of their oriental knowledge, particularly their command on Persian language. I'tisām al-Dīn, while visiting Oxford, met Mr William Jones (1746-1794) and helped him reading a Persian letter addressed to the King of England. He also states that Mr Jones benefited from the translation of a classical Persian text which he did for Captain Swinton on the ship during their journey (*Shigurf Nāma*: 60). Abū Tālib discusses in detail the manners and habits of the English which he does not like. He does not hesitate in relating the vices of the English in his account but his disapproval does not prevent him appreciating their virtues and adorable qualities and he generously admits it (*Mushāhidāt*: 214-234).

While they were highly impressed by the societal developments in Europe and never hesitated in admiring it loudly, they have reacted differently to the social life of Europe. These included their views about the gender, frequently mentioned by the western scholars. Regarding women, they all have shown their profound admiration and fascination towards them. Mostly they do not comment on the dress and the appearance but praise the human beauty without any hesitation. The enchanting white skin, the blue pairs of eyes, the strong bodies of the men and the delicate beauty of the women always mesmerize our Indian travellers. Abū Tālib, being a poet proves to be touched the most by the European women and their glamour. He wrote a number of poems to pay his homage to their elegance and charm. They all loudly admit the aesthetic satisfaction they get by looking at such a beauty of which they are kept deprived back in India. Kambalposh writes:

There were fairies all around, drinking and enjoying the company of their lovers. Had I been the King of India, I would



have bestowed a state of my kingdom on each of them. (*Tārīkh* 2004:62)

It is also worth mentioning that most of them, particularly, Abū Tālib and Kambalposh both have appreciated the women's working outside the home and have criticised the Muslim tradition of *pardah* which hinders them to take part in the progress of the country. In the context of their age, it seems quite a revolutionary approach. Kambalposh even condemns men in Europe who leave their faithful wives alone and enjoy with other women (*Tārīkh* 2004:101). He also disapproves French dancing girls' vulgar dresses and appreciates the modesty of the English women. (*Tārīkh* 2004:94).

They also focused on the education of the younger generation in Europe with admiration and praised the dedication of both the students and teachers. Every time they view the strict discipline in training the youth, they envy it and think of the poor education of their fellow countrymen, especially those who belonged to the elite class and take education for granted. They also describe the libraries and museums with delight and esteem. It does not bother them at all to see their own scholarly heritage lying in the British libraries. Rather, they are pleased to see the rare books and manuscripts in Persian and Arabic, kept with care. They find education, particularly advancement in the science and technology, a significant factor in the development and political empowerment of the West. This gives a contrast to the French Scholar Alexis De Tocqueville's (1805- 1859) view, who visited England in 1833 and was more impressed by the riches of the Oxford University than the scholarship.

In case of religion, they seem to be less compromising and are fully confident of their faith in Islam. Some western scholars have seen their insistence on Halal meat and Indian dress and avoiding alcohol as a challenge to the British habits (Fisher 2004: 106). But it should be taken positively as they were more

confident than the people who found anglicizing as a short cut to the new world. They appreciated the high standard of life in Europe but did not behave like an opportunist and, in the true sense of pluralism, offered their own culture as another respectable variety of this human mix. As far as the dietary restrictions are concerned, some of them like Mīrza ʿIṣām al-Dīn and Karīm Khān maintained their religious order and avoided pork and alcohol. They managed to get Halal meat and did not take any alcoholic drinks. But some of them, like Abū Tālib and Kambalposh not only enjoyed these luxuries but also justified their drinking alcohol by claiming that the Prophet of Islam did not forbid the grapes juice (*Tārīkh* 2004:62). However, they were sensitive to maintain their identity and despite approving the Western culture in many aspects, did not anglicise themselves in terms of appearance or religion. All of them seem contented with their faith no matter what it is. Kambalposh did not identify himself as a Muslim but declares his religion as Sulaimani. Debating with the Christian priests, he denounces all the religions because their followers have forgotten the spirit of the religion and are following the mere norms. However, when he is invited to accept Christianity and the priests criticize Hinduism and Islam, he speaks forcefully in the favour of both of these religions and questions the rationality of Christianity. His dejection of all the religions is based upon his observation of the exploitation by the religious leaders. His own faith is based on charity and love for all human beings. It is more like humanism than orthodox religiosity (*Tārīkh* 2004:77-8).

Almost all of the authors displayed their knowledge about the history and geography of Europe. They talked of different European nations and countries and their distinct character. They were aware of the differences between the French and the British, Catholics and the Protestants and among the Scottish, the Irish and the English. Countries like Rome, France, Germany, Portugal, Holland and Russia were discussed by them frequently. The

discovery of the New World, America, is a significant subject of Mirza Itisam al Dīn, Abū Tālib and Mīr Muḥammad Hussain. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) has also been mentioned by most of them with appreciation. Abū Tālib was even invited by Napoleon to see him but he could not spare time (*Mushāhidāt*: 262). When Kambalposh visited England, he expressed his wish to pay his tributes at the grave of Napoleon (*Tārīkh* 2004:61). However, the later narratives are more general and contented to give passing remarks as compared to the early ones of Mirza Itisam al Din, Mir Muhammad Hussain and Abu Talib, who discuss the subject with an intellectual depth and scholarly inquisitiveness.

One aspect that caught attention of all of them is the parliamentary system of the government. Right from Munshi Isma'īl to Masih al-Din Alvi, everyone has thrown light on the functions of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, the role of Royalty, the significance of the constitution and the functions of Judiciary. This system was completely new for them and they all tried to understand its pros and cons fully. But ironically none of them even thought of blaming their kingdoms, rulers or Empire. They showed extreme loyalty to their rulers in all conditions and had full faith in them. Though the most prominent elements that all these travel narratives share are their keen observations and exciting curiosity about the administrative order and the proactive role of the government in maintaining the quality of civic life in the country, they do not discuss or analyze the causes of the political decline in India, nor do they criticize their political system. Kambalposh is the only one who dared to do so but he also remained confined to blaming Indians for being lazy, disorganized and bad-mannered. It seems as if they were not aware of the flaws of imperialism and monarchy in India. They did not even think that their misery lay in the inefficiency of their rulers or the lack of participation of the citizens in choosing and directing their governments. We find them highly interested in

counting the factors that led the West to the path of prosperity and growth. They talk with interest of the Bank of England, Exchange, currency rate, factories, water supply system, military training, irrigation system, schools, universities and hospitals.

Though they highly appreciated the discipline, organisational hierarchy and a well-defined division of work, they did not remain ignorant of the class conflict in the European societies and observed the tension and stress borne by the lower middle and poor classes of the society. They could not analyze the conflict between the aristocracy and the middle classes like Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) who visited England a year after the passage of Third Reform Bill 1832 which gave suffrage to the middle classes. Tocqueville was able to compare the drift between the two segments of the society in the light of his own knowledge and experience of revolution in France. He found the English too on "the edge of the revolution" at that time, but our Indian travellers remained confined to their observation of beggary and forgery, smuggling and incidents of moral and financial corruption. They were unable to analyse the deeper economic and political factors that contributed to the state of the society in the Britain at that time. However, this is interesting to note that most of our Indian travellers disliked the French society in general as compared to that of English.

We can see very obvious signs of reaction to the colonial control in India in the later narratives. Kambalposh, despite being the most appreciative towards the Western culture, cannot refrain from mentioning the rude attitude and arrogance of the British in India. While admiring the amicable social behaviour of the British in London, he does not hesitate in stating that the British who go to India seem to be another species with entirely different deportment. Those British, in his opinion, have altogether no match with the ones he met in Britain.

Karim Khan too, gives praiseful remarks in his diary but one

can easily identify the undertone of aversion and resentment at some places. Although he adores the museums, the theatres, the operas, the circus, the ship yards, the artillery and the business concerns, the way he summarised the outcome of his experiences as a diplomat in England, is very different from that of his predecessors. Mirza I'tisām al-Dīn, has also shown his frustration and distress on betrayal of Captain Swinton and Robert Clive, but his tone is different from that of Karīm Khan, who states his doubts about the British justice in a very harsh and bitter tone. He complains of the corruption and bribery as follows:

Let it be known that it will amount to sheer meaningless trouble for the powerless to come to England to plead their case and seek justice. If any pain-filled heart thinks: 'I will go there, submitting myself to such distant travel abroad, then perhaps they will show me mercy', this is an absolutely wrong idea. These people with whom you must deal here have neither fear of God nor mercy in their hearts. Your very indigence and need will prevent your gaining access to their favour. But any powerful [Indian] is welcome to make this attempt, only provided that he brings 10,000.000 rupees cash and forty attendents who are proper companions, reliable supporters, civil and trustworthy people. Then don't even mention your case for a year, but during this period prepare the ground work for your case using the money you brought.... Then if you have the grace of God, you may get a verdict within a year....<sup>42</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

These accounts not only give us first-hand knowledge of the West in the period but also show the gradual change in South Asian Muslims' perception of the West. It is quite obvious that the Muslims in South Asia, until the first half of the nineteenth century, did not show any enmity or ill will against the western culture, religion and ideology as such. Whenever they got an

opportunity to study and know it closely, they admired it wholeheartedly and without any hint of inferiority. They rather took the western society as a model for their own and wished to employ all of its virtues. They were open-minded, impartial and straightforward, and had the courage to express their views, whatever they were, independently and loudly. The writers were keen observers and anxious to communicate these observations to their country fellows. This shows how sincerely they wanted to improve the intellectual, social, economic and political condition of their fellow beings. It is quite evident that they were truly eager to build bridges among the East and the West and were not conscious of any so-called clash, conflict or dichotomy. However, these relations underwent a drastic change following the Mutiny in India in 1857, and we can very easily detect the root-cause of this growing drift in the tightened colonial rule.

**Notes:**

1. Lutfullah, *Autobiography of Lutfullah, A Mohameden Gentleman and his Transactions with his Fellow Creatures* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1858), 32-4.
2. One of the earliest English translations is included in *The New General Collection of Allen, Voyages and Travels Consisting of the Most Esteemed Relations, which have been hitherto published in any language*. Book 1, part 1. London: Thomas Astely, 1744. pp. 27-40.
3. See Joseph Salter, *The Asiatic in England* (London, 1872), Harihar Des, "The Early Indian Visitors to England", *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XIII, 1924, pp. 83-114, Michael H. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism, Indian Travelers and Settlers in Britain 1600-1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004).

4. Michael Fisher gives a detailed account of early Indian visitors to Britain derived from the Court Minutes, Company's Record and personal letters and diaries of the people. He also based his argument on the evidence drawn from many of the paintings of that time showing Indians as servants, maids (Aayahs), animal trainers or slaves. *Counterflows* 2004: 22-101.

5. For the origin of the word 'farangi' see Col. Henry Yule, A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Words or Phrases and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (New Delhi: Rupa.co, 2007), 352—4.

6. I'tisām al-Dīn, 1995, pp. 117-20; Mir Muhammad Hussain, 2010, pp. 231-4;

7.. For the description of France and the French, see, Abū Tālib 1999, pp. 250-264; for the views about the Germans, see, I'tisām al-Dīn, 1995, p.14.

8. MS., Simon Digby Collection, No. 107, formerly Thomas Phillipps Collection, No. 18225, f. 50b.

9. Professor Simon Everard Digby (17 October 1932- 10 January 2010) was an English Orientalist, scholar, writer and translator who was born in Jabalpur India and spent most of his life there. He was the grandson of William Digby (1849-1904), a, English journalist and editor of *Madras Times* 1877-9 and *India* 1890-2 and author of several books on India including *The Famine Campaign in Southern India 1876-8*, *Indian Problems for English Consideration*, *India for the Indians* and *Prosperous British India* (BUCKLAND 1985: 119). His grandson Simon Digby also knew Urdu, Hindi and Persian well. He contributed to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and the *Cambridge Economic History of India*. Later he became a regular reviewer in the *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* and the *Times Literary Supplement*. He was an ex-officio member of the Oriental Faculty of the University of Oxford and also served as a visiting professor in Paris and Naples. He was awarded the Burton Medal of the Royal Asiatic Society and was a former fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford.

10. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon\\_Digby\\_\(oriental\\_scholar\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Digby_(oriental_scholar)),

accessed December 25, 2013.

11. Simon Digby, besides writing an article about this travelogue, prepared a condensed English translation in 1985, but it was never published anywhere. After the death of Simon Digby in India (10 January, 2010), a copy of this manuscript was acquired by the present author in 2013 from Richard Harris, a friend and member of the Simon Digby Memorial Charity. University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan. The author is indebted to Richard Harris and SDMC for providing the copy of the manuscript and other relevant documents. For the article he wrote, see, "An Eighteenth-Century Narrative of a Journey from Bengal to England: *Munshī Isma'īl's* New History", Christopher Shackle, *Urdu and Muslim South Asia* (London: SOAS, 1989), 49-65.

12. *Indian Muslim Perception of the West During the Eighteenth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 72-3.

13. In fact there were five Muslim travelers who wrote their memoirs and travel accounts regarding their visits to Europe in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

14. Digby, *An Eighteenth-Century Narrative*, 52.

15. He was a man of importance and was saluted when he boarded on ship for his journey to England as the maritime record shows. India Office Marine Record, 480 A.

16. MS. ff. 46b-47b). Translated by Simon Digby. A copy of this unpublished abridged translation was obtained from the Simon Digby Memorial Charity by the author in March 2013.

17. A copy of this letter is available in the Royal Asiatic Society London's Collection No. 134.

18. *Shigurf Namah-i Velaet*, ed. James Edward Alexander and Munshī Shamsher Khan (London: parbury, Allen, 1827); *Wonders of Vilayet; Being the Memoir, Originally in Persian, of a Visit to France and Britain*, trans. Kaiser Haq (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2001); *Shigurf Namah-i Vilayat*, trans. Shams N. Zaman (London, 2003). It is worth mentioning that the English translations, particularly the first one, are abridged ones and usually omit the parts where the author has criticized the western society. This can become the subject of another study.



19. The first abridged Urdu translation was included in the first English translation by J. E. Alexander, mentioned above. Later the complete text was translated in Pakistan and India twice. (i) tr. Intizāmullah (Karachi: 1963); (ii) tr. Amīr Hassan Nūrāni (Patna, Khude Bakhsh Library, 1995). The text cited in this article has been taken from the second Urdu translation by Nūrāni.

20. Muhammad Insarullah, 2006, *Jame al- Tadhkira*, Part II (Delhi: Qaumi kaunsil Brai Farogh-e Urdu Zaban), 226-7.

21. This account has been mentioned briefly in C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature- A Bio- Bibliographical Survey*, vol. I, part II (London, 1953), 1144.

22. The Arabic version under the title of *Risālah Hiat-i Jadīd Angrezī* is preserved in the Maulānā Āzād Library, Aligarh Muslim University Arabīa 'ulūm, No.33.

23. *Mushahidet-i Farang* (Lahore: Maghribi Pakistan Urdu Academy: 2010).

24. One of his important books is *Khulāsāt al-Afkār*. Besides, he prepared an abridged edition of Ali Quli Khan's *Tadhkirah Riyāz al-Shu'ara*. He also composed a divan of his poetry.

25. Mirza Hasein Ali, Mir Kudrat Ali, *Masir-i Talibi, Travels in Europe and Asia, by Mirza Abu Taleb Khan* (Calcutta: Hindustani Press, 1812).

26. English translations include: Charles Stewart, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802 and 1803*, 2 vols. (London, 1810); Second Edition of this translation with additions was published in 3 vols. (London, 1814); abridged edition, Devid Macfarlane, *The Travels of Mirza Aboo Talib Khan* (Calcutta, 1827, 1836). Charles Stewart's English translation was translated into French as *Voyages de Mirza Abu Taleb Khan* (Paris, 1811). Another edition was published in Paris, 1819. The German translation was published under the title *Reise des Mirza Abu Taleb Khan durch Asien, Afrika und Europa, in den Jahren 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802 und 1803* (Vienna, 1813). An abridged Urdu translation was made by Mirza Ali Raza Mehzun Muradebadi, *Masir-i Talibi* (Muradebad, 1904); the complete text

was translated in to Urdu in Pakistan, tr. Sarwat Ali, *Safar Nāma-i Farang* (Lahore: Fiction House, 1999).

28. The third edition of the same was published in 1898.

29. *Ājā'ibāt-i Farang*, Muzaffar Abbas, ed. (Lahore: Maktaba 'Aliya, 1982); *Ājā'ibāt-i Farang*, Tehsin Firaqi, ed. (Lahore: Makka Books, 1983); *Tārīkh-i Yūsufī*, Muhammad Ikram Chughtai, ed. (Lahore: Sang-i Mil Publications, 2004).

30. Garcin de Tassy, *Khutbat-i Garcin de Tassy az 1850-1869* (Dekkan: Anjuman-i Taraqqi-i Urdu, Aurangabad, 1935), pp. 318-9.

31. *Allen's Indian Mail*, and Official Gazette. British and Foreign India, China and all parts of the East (with the paper "The Indian News" is now incorporated. Vol. XIX, No. 503, London, Monday, September 23, 1861, p. 720-1).

32. Syed Muhsin Ali, *Sarāpā Sukhan* (Lucknow: Navil Kishore, 1875), p. 82;

33. Ed., Ram Chander, *Muhibb-i Hind*, vol 28 (November, 1849), pp.1-50; vol. 30 (January, 1850), pp. 1-29; vol. 31 (February, 1850), pp1-29; vol. 32 (April, 1850), pp. 43-50.

34. Vol 2, No. 4 (25 January, 1845); Vol. 2, No. 11 (15 March, 1847). These issues are available in the Springer Collection, Central and Regional Library Berlin and have been quoted by M. Ikram Chughtai, *Tārīkh*, p. 17-8

36. *Siyāhat Nāma* (Lahore: Idera-i Adeb-o Tanqid, 1982).

37. Garcin de Tassy, *Khutbat*, p. 168.

38. *Siyāhat Nāma*, pp. 283-4.

39. See Jehangeer Nowrojee and Hirjeebhoy Merwanjee of Bombay, *Journal of a Residence of Two Years and a Half in Great Britain* (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1841).

40. Lutfullah, *Autobiography of Lutfullah*, p. 388.

41. Masīh al-Dīn Alvī, *Safīr-i Avadh* (Lucknow: Dār al-Nāzir Press, 1929).

42. *Siyahat Nama*, p. 283-4 (English translation by Michael Fisher, *Counterflows*, p. 280).

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