VI

Education, Employment, and Identity Formation: The Eclipse of Persian by Urdu

Introduction

The advent of a new technology of communication – print – enlarged the number of people who were able to access information and opinion, and also made the process much faster than it ever was in the past. It is widely accepted now that the standardization of vernacular languages brought about by print created a new awareness of identity among groups of people. The standardization of some languages was also accompanied by the change in the fortune of some. Before 1837, Persian was the language of official business and culture, and the language used by Muslim and Hindu aristocracy. While some historians have attributed the decline of Persian and the ascent of Urdu, to colonial language policy, other historians look for the reason behind this change elsewhere. The prestige of Persian was bound up with the supremacy of the Mughals; when the power of the latter declined, so did the language associated with their court and administration. Some historians have traced this ‘silent revolt’ against Persian to the time of Aurangzeb, much before the British were influential on the Indian scene.532 This chapter investigates the complex process of the replacement of one language by another. We will focus (Anglo-Vernacular) our attention specifically on the marginalization of Persian on account of the new educational policy of the British government in India. Colonial education policy, therefore, will provide the context for our investigation. In one section of this chapter we will discuss how Urdu replaced Persian not only as the language of official business, education and communication, but also as the language in which religious texts were written and theological controversies and debates conducted.

Barbara Metcalf has suggested that there are two opposing theories about the transition from Persian to Urdu. One is the view held by Aziz Ahmad that attributes the

change to a concern for the preservation of a minority culture, seeing it as an ‘instinctive escape from the fear of submergence into the Hindu cultural milieu’. The other view put forward by Fritz Lehman is that the change from Persian to Urdu was in fact a statement of ‘Indianness’, or ‘a desire to speak not to an international but to an Indian Muslim community.’ Metcalf herself is convinced by neither explanation; in her opinion the transition from Persian to Urdu marked a fundamental shift to words a regional focus for political and cultural expression.533

It is important to note at the outset that Persian was not replaced merely at the whim of colonial rulers. Although the needs of colonial rule no doubt played an important part in determining which languages earned official patronage and favour, we cannot ignore the role of pressure groups and linguistic purity movements that arose alongside social reform movements in the nineteenth century. In work on the history of public sphere in India, Margrit Pernau has delineated the process of emergence of public opinion in India during the period of transition between the late Mughal Empire and the early colonial rule. She has also shown the links and differences between a communication system based on manuscript culture, and one based on mass print culture.534 This has been discussed in a previous chapter in greater detail, but need to be recalled here as it indicates that developments in the realm of technology can also affect the life and importance given to a particular language in a particular time and place.

Another clarification that ought to be made at the beginning of this chapter is about the use of Persian and Arabic in the Indian theological universe. Persian was the language of Indian Muslims for religious as well as other purposes for centuries. Arabic was exclusively used for religious sciences such as Quranic exegesis or law. It is commonly held that in the nineteenth century, Urdu replaced Persian as the religious and cultural language of the Indian Muslims. But Urdu prose acquired a religious and scientific ‘authority’ only gradually during the nineteenth century, most clearly after

534 Pernau, ‘From a ‘Private’ Public to a ‘Public’ Private Sphere, p. 104.
1857. In this century, as Francis Robinson believes, the rise of Urdu presented the real challenge to Persian 'just as Persian had resonances of an Imperial identity, Urdu had resonances of communal identity'. Thus, 'the second pillar of Perso-Islamic culture' as Robinson says—Islamic knowledge and the systems which transmitted it, the Persianate element—slipped away quickly. We will now move on to a detailed discussion of colonial educational policy.

The Formation of British Vernacular Educational Policy

The Vernacular policy of the British government was affecting the demand for education. The government pursued an Anglo-Vernacular educational policy on the basis of the following assumptions: vernacular languages were understood by the great mass of the population; European knowledge could only be conveyed to the people through one or other of these vernacular languages; English instruction could always be combined with a careful attention to the study of the vernacular language of the district; and finally, the vernacular was the only option for teaching the vast masses who had no knowledge of English. All this was summarized in the official language as follows:

...the importance of the vernacular literatures of India will be gradually enriched by translations of European books imbued with the spirit of European advancement, so that European knowledge may gradually be placed in this manner within the reach of all classes of the people. We look, therefore, to the English language and to the vernacular language of India together, and it is our desire to see them cultivated together in all school on India of a sufficiently high class to maintain a school master possessing the requisite qualification.

Macaulay's minute of 1835 that enshrined English as the principal medium for effecting the progressive westernization of India, and Charles Wood's dispatch of 1854

536 Robinson, 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall', p. 36.
537 Monteath, 'Note on the State of education in India (compiled in 1862)', pp. 532-3.
are generally held as the two major milestones of colonial educational policy. Between the two can be located the 1841 Court of Directors’ dispatch which assigned a key role to the vernacular languages in the diffusion of European learning. This may therefore be regarded as a quintessentially British compromise in that it sought to balance the interests and claims of the Orientalist and Anglicist parties while at the same time not offering a definitive ruling on the language of instruction. Viewed from this perspective, the Directors’ Dispatch of 1841 represented the final stage of a steady retreat from the extreme Anglicist position occupied by Macaulay in his 1835 Minute. 538 In the Wood’s Dispatch of 1854, the British Government announced the position that, ‘for the conveyance of general education to the mass of the people the vernacular must necessarily be used as the medium, while for the conveyance of a high order of education in the science and literature of Europe it was equally necessary that the English language should be the medium.’ 539 Prior to the Dispatch, in their report of 4th August 1853, the Council laid before the Government their views on education:

The use of Persian has ceased in the courts of Law and in all the offices of Government, whilst a good knowledge of English has become more and more useful to candidates for employment whether public or private. What is now the most useful education that can be given to fit a young man for respectable employment in the public service, is sound instruction in English, in the vernaculars, and in that knowledge which, with very rare exceptions, my be best acquired from books in English language. 540

Thus, this emerging consensus over the need to promote vernacular education paved the way for the policy set out in Wood’s Dispatch, which reaffirmed that the central objective of British policy in India was the diffusion of European knowledge. It therefore envisaged an education system in which both English and the vernacular languages played important roles in the transmission of European literature and science. It is no wonder that the half-century which followed the promulgation of Wood’s Dispatch

539 Monteath, ‘Note on the State of education in India (compiled in 1862)’, p. 105.
540 Howell, Education in British India, p. 53.
witnessed a rapid increase in the number of English/Anglo-vernacular secondary schools under the auspices of state-assisted missionary societies and (particularly) private Indian organisations.

As noted earlier, the expansion of English education during nineteenth century reflected the strong demand for English in the principal urban centres of British India. As in other colonial contexts, the demand sprang from an awareness that a smattering of English opened up the prospect of employment in the lower rungs of government or European-controlled commercial organisations. Since their interest in English was largely motivated by occupational concerns, students tended to abandon their studies once they had acquired a rudimentary knowledge of the language in order to take up clerical positions in the public or private sectors.

The abolition of Persian as the official language of British rule in India in 1837 (discussed in Chapter I) was followed by the decision of the Delhi Residency to henceforth accept letters and petitions from their Indian allies only in English. This made it clear that job opportunities for future generations would depend on knowledge of English. There were exceptions to this trend, as in Awadh, where the kings continued to make their own appointments until the annexation of the state in 1856. Up to this point, a factor which was conducive to the general acceptance of the Muslim service classes was the strong support given by local British officials to the concept of ‘Anglo-Oriental’ education in their north-western territories. It could, of course, be argued that ‘Anglo-Oriental’ education was as hybrid and uncongenial to Islamic values as Anglo-Muhammadan law. However, in the mid-1820s colleges were opened in both Delhi and Agra in which the teaching of Arabic and Persian was accorded an important place and high proportion of the teaching staff were ‘ulama. Delhi College, in particular, which was grafted on to a former madrasa, can be seen during its first few years at least, as something of a monument to pure Orientalism, and was intended as such by its British

supporters. In Agra, as in Delhi, the local British patrons of the Anglo-Oriental College included Arabic and Sanskrit in the original curriculum although the General Committee of Public Instruction in Calcutta had favoured only Persian and Hindi. In 1831 English classes were added, and even though the demand for oriental subjects subsequently declined, Arabic and Persian were retained, and then survived even after the ‘Anglicist’ education resolution of 1835 confined government financial assistance to ‘English education alone’. It was indicative too of British attitudes that although Persian was temporarily abolished at the Agra College, it was later restored ‘as a measure that would be acceptable to the Mahomedan population.\(^\text{543}\)

However, the new system of education could still induce young Indians to learn Persian—partly with the hope of qualifying themselves for public employment, and partly for the sake of Persian literature (in which case their domestic education proved adequate to sustain this interest). Even in 1842, five years after the abolition of Persian as official language, F. Boutros, the Principal of the Delhi College was able to state the following:

The desire of a Persian education is still, as might be expected from old associations, more general than that of instruction in English; it is besides more easily satisfied, and the attainment of its object considered as being of more extensive and honourable application. The love of Persian literature however is not much a strong and general motive with those pupils as the wish to qualify themselves for public or private employment: most of those who have been in their families inspired with a love for literature, posses the means of obtaining a domestic education not inferior to that which they could get in our Oriental College, which have not as yet been made to afford instruction in any branch of European knowledge.\(^\text{544}\)

\(^{542}\) Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, pp. 60-1.
\(^{543}\) Ibid, pp. 61-2.
\(^{544}\) F. Boutros, An Inquiry into The System of Education, Serampore Press, 1842, pp.15-6. Fascinating is the report on the examinations for 1831, which gives a detailed breakup of the origin of the students. In the English section, among the Muslims, the Shaikhs, classically the community with 23 pupils, closely followed by the Sayyids, renowned for their learning, with 19 pupils. The Mughals and Pathans, the
The Government’s views on this issue were soon translated into practical activities on the ground, and in this sense the Delhi College played a very important role for the transmission of Western knowledge. It is to the precise role of the Delhi College that we now turn our attention to.

The Eclipse of Persian and the Rise of Urdu: The Role of Delhi College

Before we proceed further, it is important to make a note of yet another landmark decision in the annals of colonial education policy in India. This was the 1839 ‘Compromise’ of Lord Auckland, wherein he presented a settlement suggesting that sufficient funds be made available to both Oriental and English studies, and that neither branch was given reason to believe that its funds were being diverted for other purposes. Auckland’s Minute appears to have been instrumental in breaking the deadlock over language policy that had prevailed in London. When the Court of Directors finally delivered their verdict on the Macaulay-Bentinck project, Auckland’s compromise formed the basis of their recommendations, particularly in relation to the key issue of funding.\textsuperscript{545} This ‘compromise’, therefore, combined the liberal concern to impart Western learning and science with the Orientalist emphasis on the use of Indian languages and cultural forms. The translation of key texts was to play a larger role in educational initiatives than ever before.

Lord Auckland also called for an investigation into the best means for constructing a comprehensive corpus of textbooks under one general scheme of control and superintendence. This resulted in the institution of a General Committee of Public

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\textsuperscript{545} Evans, ‘Macaulay’s Minute Revisited: Colonial Language Policy in Nineteenth-century India’, 274.
Instruction. The Delhi Committee of Public Instruction, which included both British officials and local notables, investigated the state of learning in the Mughal capital in the early 1820s. They took a keen interest in Ghaziuddin Khan’s Madrasa for which the income from its original waqf declined. They then obtained a grant from the general education fund for the support of Oriental learning at the same madrasa. In 1827 it started English classes and Western sciences. About this time, it began to be called Delhi College, where the medium of instruction was Urdu. 546

From 1825, people associated with the Delhi College or those belonged to learned societies began to use Urdu instead of Persian. Delhi College also encouraged the development of a scholarly prose style, which was different from earlier ones: the latter was more flowery court prose, while the former emphasized clarity of expression and a direct style of transmission of thoughts and ideas. This also contributed to the development of new literary forms, such as the novel, the short story, the essay, and literary criticism. 547 New literary forms and styles encouraged the exchange of ideas in an emergent periodical literature, including newspapers and the periodicals published by the college and other presses. Delhi College thus contributed to the emergence of an Urdu-speaking and reading élite in North India, composed of individuals of all religious persuasions. 548

The college also incorporated two styles of transmission of knowledge: The first was the madrasa tradition, based on the teacher-student (ustad-shagird) relationship and emphasizing the oral transmission of set texts. The texts may have been copied out by hand, but the reproduction of knowledge was chiefly via memorization and oral repetition and not through the printed word. The second style followed the Western method, where the emphasis was increasingly on printed textbooks that could be mechanically

547 It was quite natural that tales and stories were given priorities by the translators of prose. Between 1801 and 1804 several Persian works were translated into Urdu such as *Araish-e-Mahfil* (1801), *Ganj-e-Khubs* (1820), *Bagh-e-Urdu* (1802), *Akhlq-e-Hindi* (1803), *Nasr-Benazir* (1803), *Bagh-e-Bahar* (1804), *Gile-e­-Bakawali* (1804). Das, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 74.
reproduced and hence readily and cheaply available for students to read. They also did away with the need for memorization of entire books or passages thereof.

Orientalist scholars, British administrators and local literati and notables all played a part in the creation of Delhi College. The college not only engaged in instruction, but also in translation, publication, and popularization of Western forms of knowledge. As Gail Minault has rightly pointed out 'vernacularization'—making more knowledge available to more people in their local language—was a result of the work done in the college. This involved translation of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit into Urdu for the oriental section of the college, and texts in English and other western languages into Urdu for the Anglo-Vernacular section.

The programme for vernacular textbook production at Delhi College was first outlined in an educational minute written by Felix Boutros, the superintendent of Delhi College in 1842. After describing his plan for publication he suggested guidelines for the maintenance of consistency across the translational scheme. Thus, there was a veritable explosion of Urdu-language textbooks prepared at Delhi, which were then published by either the college itself or the Agra School Book Society.

At one time, a printing press under the name of Matba‘ul Ulum was set up in the Delhi College. It published not only the magazines of the college but also the books of the Vernacular Translation Society. Though the press was nominally attached to the college, it was set up by the then Principal as a limited company and most of the teachers were its shareholders—they were thus able to increase their income because the profit earned from the annual sale of publications was equally distributed among them. At both Delhi and Agra, several Urdu journals were published in the mid-1840s from

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549 Ibid, pp. 120-21.
551 Dodsom, Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture India, 1770-1880, p. 131.
552 M. Ikram Chaghatai, 'Dr Aloys Sprenger and Delhi College', in Delhi College: Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Educational before 1857, pp. 120-21.
government colleges, including the *Qiran-us Sa'adain*, which covered scientific and other subjects, and endeavoured to expose practical European inventions.\(^{553}\)

**Translation as an Instrument for the Promotion of Urdu**

It has been argued that the development of Urdu as a language of public discourse and transmission of Western knowledge in print occurred, in part, due to the contributions of personalities associated with the Delhi College directly or indirectly.\(^{554}\) One activity that contributed to the elevation of Urdu at the expense of Persian was the encouragement that the British gave to the translation of scientific texts from English to Urdu. At the same time there was an attempt to write such books in Urdu itself. This was significant because till the beginning of the nineteenth century, Persian had been the most common medium of publication of scientific literature. From about 1825 onwards, people gravitating around Delhi College, or belonging to several learned societies, started using Urdu.\(^{555}\) This was perhaps both a symptom as well as a cause of the decline of Persian.

In 1843, a new society called the ‘Society for the Publication of Knowledge of India through the Medium of Vernacular Languages’ (commonly known as the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society) was formed to accelerate the pace of translation work. It gave priority to the translation of important books in English, Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian into Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali.\(^{556}\) In 1862, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) founded his Scientific Society in Ghazipur. Some of Sir Syed’s Urdu works indicate that his scheme was inspired by the Vernacular Translation Society of the Delhi College.\(^{557}\)

The importance that the British in North India in the 1850s attached to Urdu is indicated by a note written by a senior government official in 1854 as part of the Report on Educational Books in the Vernacular in the North Western provinces. It reads as follows:

\(^{553}\) Dodsom, *Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture India, 1770-1880*, p. 133.
\(^{554}\) Minault, ‘Delhi College and Urdu’, pp. 131-32.
\(^{555}\) Gaborieau, ‘Late Persian, Early Urdu’, p. 184.
\(^{556}\) Chaghatai, ‘Dr Aloys Sprenger and Delhi College’, p. 115.
\(^{557}\) *Ibid*, p. 117.
For educational purposes, as distinct from general literature, Urdu should be used as the means of conveying rudimentary and practical instruction to the masses in the ordinary branches of education. But for subjects more abstruse and for the higher walks of every subject, English, and English only, should be employed. But if it is deemed necessary to teach chemistry, science, geology, botany etc to the masses, who can only be reached through the vernacular languages, one such languages should be selected, and Urdu has the greatest capabilities. But whatever language be chosen, no attempt should I think be made to form an elaborate system of vernacular scientific nomenclature, but the English term in general use should be adopted. They will be just as intelligible to those for whom the treatises are intended as Sanskrit compounds or Arabic derivatives; and the higher and better educated classes will already have become familiar with these terms in the English studies. One great point will be gained if the Europeans and the educated native thus learn to use a common alphabet of science, which is not altogether unknown the number, who must always remain at best but partially instructed.558

The author added that his remarks applied mainly to educational works and that in terms of general literature the foundations of a ‘healthy useful’ Urdu literature had not yet been laid. He questioned if translations from a foreign tongue could ever form a good foundation, and pointed to the ‘insuperable’ difficulty of adapting the literature of the West so as to render translation intelligible and acceptable to its readers. He further said that works that were popular in England could be adapted for India only when they were ‘re-written’ and ‘re-cast’ as they discussed and described ‘objects and customs familiar enough in England but utterly unknown, or known only to misunderstood, out here’. He suggested that only those texts from English literature be translated into Urdu that were ‘universal, not local, and which speak to all times and to all people’. He included among

such texts *Robinson Crusoe*, *The History of the Plague*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress* ('if the religious character of it be not an objection'). He concluded by stating that:

To these and others like them should I think be added numerous works connected with India, its history, productions, resources, geography etc., and every effort should be made to induce educated native gentlemen to write original works on their own country and countrymen. The volume of travels recently published by Ameechund... is of this kind, and is a valuable addition to Urdu literature. The native can only be reached through their own countrymen, and works of indigenous growth, even if they contain some errors and prejudices, will circulate far more widely, and on the whole do more good, than any translations from foreign tongues.\(^{559}\)

Moreover, it was the English language as the most suitable 'feeder language' for the introduction of scientific terminology into Urdu. As Dodson says 'this was a policy that reflected views of English as a 'powerful' vehicle for the expression of scientific truth, but also, and more importantly, the desire to reaffirm within the colonial educational context the civilisational ascendancy of Britain through its historical connection with scientific discovery and progress.\(^{560}\)

In 1855, another official listed and commented on some of the books that had been translated from Persian to Urdu. Among them he included *Shumsher Khanee* (sic) (an abridged version of the *Shahnama*), translated by Munshi Mul Chand. He commented that 'considerable pruning might make this a good standard class-book for Oordoo [sic] verse. It is elegantly written, excepting where style is sacrificed to rhythm'. Another work was the *Insha-i Madho Ram*, translated into Urdu by Munshi Saiyid

\(^{559}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{560}\) Dodson, *Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture India, 1770-1880*, p. 131-32.
Muhammad, which was dismissed as being a 'servile and literal Urdu rendering of the Persian original as a school-book is useless'.

However, among the British there were even those who did not find anything suitable for translation. The British Principal of the Bareilly College wrote in 1854 that although he had perused many original Urdu and Hindi works as well as translations from Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit, he had not found even one suited to the use of the college. In his opinion,

The ethical works (as the *Ukhlq Julalee* [Akhlaq-i Jalali] are tedious, ill-arranged, and imperfect, and of course contain much false doctrine, physical, political, and moral. The works of imagination are utterly childish in matter, and never inculcate with consistency one noble or liberal sentiment, their piety is mere blind submission to fate; their charity is a loan on excessive usury; their generosity reckless profusion; their wisdom the most paltry cunning.

He further stated that it was on account of the 'poverty of the Oordoo [sic] language, and the consequent necessity of borrowing from some other' that there was a delay. He urged the government to decide on another language that could be drawn on, as this delay was not advantageous to anyone. He himself proposed that insofar as terminology—both scientific and non-scientific—was concerned, those terms be adopted that had been,

...already accepted by all civilized nations. Many Greek words have been transferred into the Arabic, and some into the Oordoo [sic]; educated natives would generally make no objection to them; and to the uneducated, with whom we are most immediately concerned, a Greek or Latin word is neither worse nor better than and Arabic or Sanscrit [sic] one—each equally requiring explanation.

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562 Among the Urdu works he included *Bagh-o Bahar*, *Gul-i Bakaoli*, *Akhlaq-i Jalali*, *Zebdat-ul Khayal*. Among the Hindi works were included *Prem Sagar*, *Ramjeet* and *Satsai*. Letter from V. Tragear, Esq., *Principal of the Bareilly College*, to C. P. Carmichael, Esq.,—Dated Bareilly, 23rd September, 1854. Ibid, pp. 412-13.
when first met with. For words not purely scientific, resort must I think be had to
Arabic and Persian; the advantages of these tongues over Sanscrit [sic] are—first,
that they have already supplied a large number of words now established
vernacular; secondly, that they are and always have been spoken languages, and
have a facility of pronunciation that the later has not. I confess, however, that my
ignorance of all three disqualifies me from saying more on this.

Thus, irrespective of the negative opinion of Urdu held by some British officials, by the
mid-1840, Urdu had nevertheless become the principal vernacular medium for the
publication of European ‘useful’ knowledge. Delhi and Agra, with their large Muslim
and Urdu-speaking populations had become important locations of textbook translation,
publication, and distribution. An institutional framework exemplified by the Delhi
College was put in place and this further bolstered Urdu as a maker of jobs and also as a
marker of (Muslim) identity. Persian, sandwiched as it was by the ascent of English as
the official language of India’s British rulers and the ascent of Urdu as a marker of
regional identity, got crushed.

**English Education among Muslims**

The events of 1857 had an abiding impact on political and cultural traditions. One
consequence that is of particular concern to us is that the status of Persian as the
privileged language of administration, thoughts, and ideas was irrevocably lost. After
this period, Persian became the province of two groups of ‘Persian-knowing and Urdu
speaking Muslim elite’: traditionalists and modernists. While traditionalist advocated
traditional knowledge system (mostly concentrated on religion), modernists were ready to
embrace the new modern knowledge through the medium of Urdu. The ‘Anglo-Oriental’
college in Delhi presents in the 1840s and early 1850s, the most appropriate side for

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563 M. Asaduddin, ‘The West in Nineteenth-Century Imagination: Some Reflection on the Transition from a
Persinate Knowledge System to the Template of Urdu and English’, *Annual of Urdu Studies*, Vol., 18,
assessing both the effects of the Company's conscious policy of 'placation through education', and also the nature and extent of the so-called 'Delhi Renaissance'.

In the Calcutta Madrasa an English class had been founded as early as 1826. It was reorganized into an English School in 1829, and continued till 1853. The use of English in madrasa instruction shows the changing educational policy which initially was based on teachings of Persian and Arabic, but was increasingly based on English by mid nineteenth century. The madrasas were generally reduced to the status of ordinary maktabs or grammar schools requiring Persian-knowing professionals like qazis and munshis.

In an interesting report on the Calcutta Madrasa in 1852, Judge Fred J. Halliday asked 'what is it to us whether the rising generation of Mussalmans know Persian or not' and that 'if we let it alone, [Persian] will soon in India die a natural death'. At the same time, the demand for English education had not yet taken firm root in the mind of the Muslim community. As Abdul Latif Khan was to recount later, 'the Mahomedan community in general were in those days (1852-53) rather averse to giving their children an English education, and even to discuss the question amongst themselves.' Abdul Latif Khan was convinced that 'English education would not only establish bridge of understanding between the ruler and the ruled, but also open up new avenues of social and political progress for the Muslim of Bengal.

Even though Abdul Latif was a pioneer in advocating among Muslims the necessity of English in modern times, the emphasis on English learning was gradual. In his correspondence with the educational department Moulvi Muhammad Ilahdad stated,

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564 For encounter of Muslims ashríf and missionaries with Delhi College, see Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, pp. 196-202.
565 Ibid, p. 49.
567 Nawab Abdool Luteef Khan Bahadoor, A Short Account of My Public life, pp. 11-2
My son is now in the sixth class of the Anglo-Persian department. My object is that he should qualify himself for Government employment, and if he fails in getting that, he should be well educated both in Arabic and English, to fit him for carrying on any business in which he may engage. Apart from Government employ, I consider knowledge of English now essential. I believe that many respectable Mahomedans concur with me in the above opinions, but I can not say whether the majority of Mahomedan agree with me.\textsuperscript{569}

In another letter, Maulvi Ghulam Qadir stated the following:

I was appointed \textit{Munshi} in 1856. I entered the old \textit{Madrasa} as a student in 1822. I have one son now in the first-year class of the Presidency College.... My second son, Ahmed was a distinguished student of the Presidency College, and is now a Deputy Magistrate. If I had 100 sons, I would give them the best English education in my power, because it would enable them to live in ease: ...For getting on in the world, I consider English is essential, but on religious grounds, a Mahomedan should know Arabic....I consider English is absolutely necessary if a man wishes to get on in the word.\textsuperscript{570}

Maulvi Obaidullah, who was Professor of Arabic in Hugli College wrote to the educational department in 1869 to the effect that

I acknowledge the importance attached to a knowledge of Persian by Mahomedans, but I see difficulties in the way of taking up Persian conjointly with English and Arabic. Many boys at Hooghly have to my knowledge abandoned the study of Persian with the contest of their guardians, for the purpose of learning English and Arabic.\textsuperscript{571}

\textsuperscript{569} 'Correspondence on the Subject of the Educational of the Muhammadan Community in British India and their Employment in the Public Service Generally' in \textit{Selection from the Records of the Government of India (Home Departmen). No CCv., Superintendent of Government, Calcutta. 1886, p. 60.}
\textsuperscript{570} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 62-3.
\textsuperscript{571} \textit{Ibid}, p. 65.
But, Persian being so firmly ingrained in the educational system of the people, he stated that the 'Islamic ideas should form the central theme of Muslim education, towards which end the teaching of English should combine with the traditional disciplines in Arabic and Persian.' In 1853, his suggestions for the reform of syllabi at the Calcutta Madrasa resulted in the establishment of the Anglo-Persian Department, and placing greater emphasis on English in the junior grades.

In a letter that he wrote in 1861 to Sir John Grant on the subject of the Hugli Madrasa, Abdul Latif pointed out that,

The worldly class consists of those who are not anxious for an Arabic education, but would content themselves with sufficient Persian to enable them to transact business and move in society. This class is by far the most numerous, and possessed of wealth and property, including as it does the nobility, the gentry, and the merchants; and it is by this class that the benefits of an English education will be appreciated and sought after.

The significance of this last quotation lies in the fact that it indicates the continuing demand for Persian among the Muslim elites a full quarter century after it was abolished as an official language. Although the Muslim elites were aware that English was the language that would enable them to approach the distant world of their rulers, they were not unaware that preserving Persian had a vital role to play in the preservation of their own identity as being connected to that of the Mughal Emperors who had ruled India for hundreds of years.

573 "The worldly class" means Muslims, who are willing to learn English. Moulvie Abdool Luteef Khan Bahadoor, A paper on Mahomedan education in Bengal, Calcutta, 1869, p. 11.
Learning Persian to Learn Urdu: The Place of Persian in the Education System of the North West Province

One important way in which the decline of Persian in the nineteenth century can be explained is by charting the rise of Urdu. Turning to North India, the Educational Department’s Report of 1859-60 provides valuable insights into the approach of the Government of the North-Western Provinces to the issue of Persian. Although this report stated that Persian ‘may be pursued as well outside as within the College wall’ and that study of Persian Grammar would benefit Urdu scholars, nonetheless, it also stated that ‘the abolition of the purely Oriental Department, while it might for a time decrease the number of Students, would bring many boys into the English classes’574. Thus, colonial policy was based on the assumption that one language (English) could only grow at the expense of another (Persian). The notion that a person could be equally well versed in more than one language was absent, and therefore English and Persian were situated as rivals and not allies in the pursuit of knowledge.

However, there also existed another idea, and that was that it was impossible to learn Urdu without first learning Persian. According to Henry Stewart Reid, Inspector General of Schools in the North Western Provinces from 1850 to 1854, out of 3,000 school with 25,000 children in 1850, only 5 schools were classified as ‘Urdu Schools’ while there were 1259 Persian schools.575 This indicates that there was more demand for Persian education, and perhaps also that it was more productive to learn Persian (and then Urdu as an auxiliary language) rather than learning only Urdu and ignoring Persian altogether.

Once again, it is to the example of Sir Syed Ahmed that we must turn to understand the position of Persian in the literary-cultural life of North India after the mid-nineteenth century. Initially, Sir Syed set up a Persian school at Muradabad in 1859 on

574 Monteath, ‘Note on the State of education in India (compiled in 1862)’, p. 30.

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the lines of the old educational system. The school report of January 1, 1860 showed a
student population of 175; Muslims being 103 and Hindus 72. All four classes were
taught in Urdu and for the sixth to seventh grades of classes I to IV Persian texts included
Sa'di's Gulistan, Bostan, as well as Amadnamah, Anwar-i Suhailiy, and Karima—the
traditional books which Sir Syed had studied with his mother and grandfather.576 The
educational system had new elements grafted on to it, such as an attendance register, a
fixed curriculum and examinations.577

Sir Syed also published a statement protesting against the use of the
vernaculars, especially of Urdu, as the medium of instruction in Government schools.578
His ideas had clearly changed by the time he founded the Translation Society, known as
the Scientific Society of Aligarh, at Ghazipur on 9th January 1864.579 Persian was
neglected and he chose Urdu. The reason could have been that he was aware of the role
of language in the project of building a Muslim identity. Already translation of new
knowledge into Urdu had been started by John Gilchrist at Fort William College; later,
Delhi College was a centre of the translation of Western knowledge into Urdu. These
translation activities, combined with the spread of print culture and print media were
'crucial factors in the growth and spread of indigenous languages and the gradual
disappearance of Persian'. 580

At the same time, the desire of people for learning English was ever increasing.
The educational Reports of the North West Province for the years 1865-66 remarks
about the '...rapidly extending desire among the people for the acquisition of a
knowledge of the English language, but as yet apparently it is chiefly taught as a
language and not made to supersede the Vernacular as a medium of instruction.'581

576 Hafeez Malik, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan, Columbia
577 Francis Robinson, Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces’ Muslims,
62.
579 G. F. I. Graham, The Life and Work of Syed Ahmad khan, reprint in Idarah-I Adabiyyat-I Delhi, 1974,
First Edition 1885, p.72.
581 Monteath, ‘Note on the State of education in India (compiled in 1862)’, p. 273.
contrast to the Bengal region, where English language could be accepted openly, in the North Western Province, due to the powerful presence of Persian and Indo-Persian culture, the number of Persian students continued to form an important part of the educational system of the Government.

Christopher King’s data on the number of students in different regions of the NWP in schools of all levels in 1860 shows that the 53.9% of student attended ‘Islamic heritage’ (mostly Persian) classes while 44.4% attended ‘Hindu heritage’ classes and just 1.7% attended English classes. The following table indicates the number of pupils studying different languages in different regions in 1865-66.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Persian</th>
<th>Urdu</th>
<th>Bengali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. W. Provinces</td>
<td>16,136</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>11,217</td>
<td>47,222</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awadh</td>
<td>4,367</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>5,987</td>
<td>20,317</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>43,472</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>10,692</td>
<td>2,398</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>7,722</td>
<td>1,324</td>
<td>1,269</td>
<td>25,126</td>
<td>31,001</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>3,515</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>3,149</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Thus, there was not an all India pattern as far as the educational popularity of any one language was concerned. English, for example, was heavily in demand in Madras, Bombay and the Central Provinces, but occupied a distant second position after Urdu in the North Western Provinces. In the same region, more than four times as many students studies Urdu as compared to Persian.

382 King, One Language, Two Scripts, p. 99.
The next two tables show the development of English learning in Awadh, which was famous for its Persian education.

**Table XVIX**

The progress of English education in Awadh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Pupils Learning English at the end of year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864-65</td>
<td>2,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-66</td>
<td>2,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866-67</td>
<td>3,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867-68</td>
<td>3,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868-69</td>
<td>4,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869-70</td>
<td>4,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-71</td>
<td>4,390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although the number of pupils learning English registered a steady increase, doubling in six years, at the same time interest in learning Persian continued for a long time. According to Table XIX, even as late as 1871, Urdu and Persian were more popular than English. Between Urdu and Persian, Urdu was far more popular, even though interest in Persian remained.

**Table XX**

Number of boys learning various languages: 1870-71.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Urdu</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>Persian</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>1,699</td>
<td>17,009</td>
<td>4,836</td>
<td>4,924</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although King states that Persian could keep its prestige until the 1890s, there is no doubt that Urdu was accepted by Muslim as a language that served as marker of community identity, in opposition to that of the Hindus in the context of the Hindi movement. Persian was pushed into a corner from two sides: English on the one hand, Urdu on the other, although the pressure from Urdu was greater.  

In March 1882, Nawab Abdul Latif appeared before the Education Commission and gave expression to his ‘practical reflections’ on the present state of Muslim education. He believed that since Muslims regarded knowledge of Urdu and Persian as the hallmark of refinement, Urdu teachers should be appointed in primary school, Persian teachers in middle schools, and Arabic and Persian teachers in high schools, in the predominantly Muslim areas. He also suggested that Urdu be recognized and encouraged as the ‘real vernacular’.

The trends in North India were being repeated elsewhere as well. In vindicating Urdu as the national language of Muslims of Bombay, Badruddin Tyabji stood along with Sir Syed and Amir Ali on the common platform of Muslim national consciousness. For them, ‘Urdu, together with Persian and Arabic, forms a group of language in which the whole of Mahomedan religious and secular literature exists.

Print Technology and Muslim Religious Reformers

By the nineteenth century, Persian, Arabic and Urdu all were languages in which debates over Islam were carried out, and through which the majority of the Muslim population accessed their religious texts. Francis Robinson estimates that by the 1870s editions of the Quran, and other religious books, were selling in tens of thousands. All who observed the world of printing noted how Muslims understood the power of the press. In Upper India

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584 Abbasi, Genesis of Muslim fundamentalism in British India, p. 153.
at the beginning of the twentieth century 4,000-5,000 books were being published in Urdu every decade and there was newspaper circulation in tens of thousands. 588

Muhammad Qasim Zaman, speaking generally of colonial times, states that numerous translations of the Quran and of other religious classics were printed in Urdu after the mid nineteenth century, which contributed both to the development of the language, and more importantly, to the strengthening of religious identity among Muslims. While commentaries on classical collections of hadith, in Arabic or Persian, had of course been written for centuries, the technology of print created new possibilities in the nineteenth century. 589 In what follows we discuss the reasons behind translation of religious texts in Urdu and its impact on Persian.

Muslim religious leaders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries promoted internal reform as a response to Britain’s rule of India. The Indian reform movements also highlighted the hadith literature. 590 The focus of the hadith literature was the Prophet, and all the Indian Muslim reform movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were united in their strong emphasis on the personality and biography of the Prophet. The influence of Wahhabi movement on Indian reform movements was felt through the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, extensive periods of study by a small number of Indian Muslims at Mecca and Medina, and by the general improvement in communications which occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The hadith scholar Shah Waliullah 591 attacked the rationalist scholastic tradition of Iran and Central Asia as a source of arid intellectualism and confusion. He has been credited with the revitalization of religious and spiritual life which, predating, but then outliving, the

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590 The hadith are narratives (literally, stories or news reports) about the Prophet (d. 632), relating to something he did or said. These narratives were orally transmitted by his followers to successive generations of Muslims before being written down about a century after his death.
591 His chief contribution to Islamic studies was to insist on the importance of the study of hadith, the traditions of the Prophet, and to argue that the 'ilmaha had an obligation to study the original sources (the Qur'an and hadith) and draw on all four Sunni schools of law (madhhab, pl. madhahib) eclectically to make legal judgments.
cultural revival already identified with the city of Delhi, was then transmitted to Muslim, first in the *qasbahs* of northern India, but subsequently in other parts of India and the wider Islamic world.\(^{592}\) Another severe challenge to Persian came from the Naqshbandiya, who began to transmit Islamic knowledge more and more in regional languages.\(^{593}\)

According to Aziz Ahmed, 'to the rapid collapse of Muslim power in India after the death of Aurangzeb, and to the rise of Marathas and the Jats, Shah Waliullah reacted with pragmatic sensitiveness; and in this reaction formulated the tradition for succeeding generations, of Indo-Muslim resistance to the concentration of power in non-Muslim hands.'\(^{594}\) Shah Waliullah wrote in both Arabic and Persian, and visited Delhi in 1700 and 1722. Sa’d-ul Allah Gulshan, Wali’s preceptor in the Naqshbandi order, and his disciple as a poet, advised him to compose in Persian rather than in the Indian tradition, using Persian conventions and images.\(^{595}\) Ahmad says that he 'was conscious of the religio-ethical disintegration of Islam in general, and therefore chose Arabic rather than Persian as the language for *Hujjat-ul Allah-ul Baligha* (The Conclusive Argument for God), his major contribution to theological dialectics, to rehabilitate the theory and practice of orthodox Sunni belief.'\(^{596}\) *Tafhīmāt-ul Ilahiya* (Instructions or Clear Understanding) is one of his most comprehensive metaphysical works. The work is divided into sections called *tajhim* (instruction). Both Arabic and Persian languages are used for the expression of ideas and concepts in this work. He believed that Muslims should turn to the study of the revealed sciences; only these could bring them closer to the central teaching of the faith. To draw people nearer to religious truth\(^ {597}\), he took the immensely courageous step of translating the Quran into Persian.\(^ {598}\) It is believed to be the first complete translation of the Quran from the Arabic by an Indian Muslim scholar. He initiated a movement with the theme "Back to the Quran", in which the translation was used to facilitate its understanding among all the Muslims of India. He wanted his

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\(^{592}\) Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, p. 66.

\(^{593}\) Robinson, *Ulama of Farangi Mahall*, p. 36.


\(^{595}\) Ibid. p. 252.

\(^{596}\) Ibid. p. 201.

\(^{597}\) Quran already was rendered in India by Qazi Shihab-ud Din Dawlatabadi.

\(^{598}\) Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the India Environment*, p. 205.
interpretations of Quranic sciences available to the whole educated class, not only to the 'ulama.\textsuperscript{599}

At this point, it is essential for us to discuss the question of translation. The reformers' emphasis on authoritative texts, namely, the Qur'an which Muslims regarded as the literal word of God, and secondarily the traditions of the Prophet (hadith), led to the first translations of the Qur'an. Muslim reformers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries translated the Qur'an into Persian, and much later into Urdu and other Indian languages.\textsuperscript{600}

The key to the motivation behind these early translations was perhaps to bring them to those Muslims who were not formally educated. A growing interest in providing access to the Quran gave rise to translations and commentaries explaining the sacred text through the medium of the vernacular under the influence of Shah Waliullah and his school. Waliullah's son, Rafi-ud Din (1750-1818), produced a literal translation of the Quran in Urdu. This was followed by a more idiomatic Urdu rendering by another of his sons, Shah 'Abd-ul Qadir (1753-1813) in the last year of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{601} The later Urdu translation is so closely modelled on Shah Waliullah's that it has often been described as an Urdu rendering of Shah Waliullah's Persian. It was published under the title \textit{Muzih-ul Quran}, in 1829. The reason why it has been undertaken soon after his brother's, although to be an Urdu replica of his father's Persian one, it became 'it pays attention to Urdu syntax, instead of reproducing the original word for word.'\textsuperscript{602} These

\textsuperscript{599} Metcalf, \textit{Islamic Revival in British India}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{601} Ahmad. \textit{Studies in Islamic Culture in the India Environment}, p.206, suggests that the Quranic translations into Urdu may have been inspired not only by the example of Shah Waliullah but also by that of the missionaries Benjamin Schulze (1741) and Henry Martyn (1814), who translated the Bible into Urdu. Annemarie Schimmel, \textit{Classical Urdu Literature from the Beginning to Iqbal}, p. 205, cited by Metcalf, \textit{Islamic Revival in British India}, p. 48. The first, albeit partial, Urdu translation of the Quran is Shah Muradullah Ansari Sambhail’s \textit{Khudai Na’mat} or (Godsend, competed in 1770). In many printed versions it is erroneously inscribed as \textit{Khuda ki Na’mat}. The \textit{tafsir} has been published as \textit{Tafsir-i Muraddiya}, in editions from Calcutta (first published in Bengal in 1831), Bombay (1867CE), Kanpur and Lahore.


translations were used and printed by the later reformers (see below), including the Wahhabis, who considered Shah Waliullah’s sons as forerunners of their movement. 603

In her research on Quranic translations and the development of Urdu prose, Mehr Afshan Farooqi examines the general opinion that Urdu prose is a ‘gift’ from the British and began with the establishment of Fort William College around 1801. She then goes back to early Urdu prose which was used for religious texts, and is generally ignored by scholarship. Farooqi argues that Urdu prose had been rooted in early Urdu religious text, although they can not be considered the source for ‘modern Urdu prose’

As Farooqi mentions each one of the dibachas emphasizes the decline in Arabic and Persian learning and the need to produce texts for a readership comfortable with the spoken vernacular, zaban-i Hindi. To her these translations also provide a clue to the development of modern Urdu prose that has been neglected by modern historian of the language. 604 As an example, she takes the introduction to Karbal Katha 605 or Deh majlis, where the author mentions that the idiomatic Persian of Rauzat-us Shuhada (Mausoleum of the Martyrs) could be understood by audience more if it was translated into a Hindi version with suitable metaphors. 606 In Fazl Ali’s words:

This humble, inadequate servant as per request from the mentor used to recite the Rauzat-us Shuhada, but the ladies and the women in the assembly could not understand the meaning. And the emotionally stirring and moving parts from that remarkable book could not bring tears to their eyes because of the difficulty of

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603 Gaborieau, ‘Late Persian, Early Urdu, pp. 171-72.
605 Fazl Ali Fazli’s Karbal katha or Deh majlis, (circa 1732-33) and revised in 1748-49, was a religious narrative, an abridged or creative translation of Vaiz Kashfi’s (d. 1504) Persian work, Rauzat-us Shuhada. An Urdu translation of the Rawzat-us Shuhada, known as the Karbal Katha [The Story of Karbala], had already been made by one Fazl Ali (known as Fazli) between 1145/1732 and 1162/1749.
606 It is important to note that in Ali’s descriptions the Karbala narratives or kitab khwani book recitation was read in the old court language of Persian while the marthiya were chanted in the native language of Urdu. It was partly for this reason that marthiya was so much more popular at that time than the narrative recitation.
Persian vocabulary. It occurred to this humble one that if the above-mentioned book were translated in a colourful idiom with Hindi metaphors, it would be easily understood for the general public, both men and women.\footnote{Karbal Ka\textit{tha}, p.37-38 cited in Farooqi, 'Changing Literary Patterns in Eighteenth Century North India', p. 225. Oesterheld shows how a genre of \textit{marthiya} became aesthetic-emotional sensitivity on the Urdu prose. See: Christaina Oesterheld, 'looking Beyond Gul-o-bulbul: Observations on Marsiyas by Fazli and Sauda' in ed., Francesca Orsini, \textit{Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture}, Orient Black Swan, New Delhi, 2010. Suffering is one of important theme characterizing the Shi'a theology of the sermons. For analysis of it see: Toby M. Howarth, \textit{The Twelve Shia as a Muslim Minority in India: Pulpit of Tears}, Routledge, London, 2005, pp. 157-160.}

The Hindi translation naturally became very popular although it is interesting that Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali does not mention it in her descriptions. Ali writes about the \textit{kitab khwani} that she was familiar with (but could not understand because it was in Persian), ‘It is, I am assured, a pathetic, fine composition, and a faithful narrative of each particular circumstance in the history of their leaders . . . the work-being conveyed in the language of the country, every word is understood, and very deeply felt.’\footnote{Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, \textit{Observations on the Mussulmans of India}. Delhi: Deep Publications, 1975. p. 29.}

In the introduction to \textit{Tafsir-i Muradiya}, Shah Muradullah explains the need for a Hindi (Urdu) translation.

Lakhs and crores of Muslims who speak Hindi don’t know Arabic or Persian... for those who hard read the Quran in Arabic (but did not understand Arabic) I used to explain the meaning (\textit{tafsir}) in Hindi. The listeners, both men and women were very attentive and eager... Several among the audience of sincere listeners said how wonderful it would be if they could understand the Quran and know the meaning of what they read... Thus God granted their prayer: their earnestness and honest desire to understand what they read put this idea in the head of this humble one to open my discourse in Hindi so that it could be read... Those whose native language was Persian followed the lead from Arabic and wrote thousands of books on theology, \textit{hadith}, \textit{tafsir}, \textit{sharah} for the sake of fellow Persian speakers and for those who knew Persian, and thus brought all the knowledge into Persian.
Not one of the buzurgs or alims [learned persons] wrote a religious treatise in Hindi.  

Thus, religious reformers eager to give shape to a unique Muslim identity were very well aware of the advantages of using a language with which their target audience was familiar.

**Persian Printing and Muslim Religious Reformers and Missionaries**

The relationship between Islam and print has been analysed by Francis Robinson in a very nuanced way. According to him, 'Muslims only came to adopt printing when they felt Islam itself was at stake and print was a necessary weapon in the defense of the faith.' He points out that Indian Muslims perceived a threat from European civilization as well as from the Hindu world. In addition, they faced rapid economic and social changes. Finally, they were also faced with the marginalization of much that made sense of their world and gave meaning to their deepest beings. Printing was a crucial means to protect Islam, in confrontation a rising consciousness of the new Hindu identity and the activities of Christian missionaries. There was thus also great activity in terms of translating texts from the original Arabic and Persian to vernacular languages. The ulama—by translating key works of the Islamic tradition into Indian languages and by printing them large-scale—aimed to give Muslim society strength to cope with colonial rule.

As early as the first decades of the nineteenth century, the reformers set the pattern of spreading religious teachings by new methods of cheap publications. Lithographic presses in northern India came first to towns dominated by Muslims: Bareilly, Muradabad, Agra, Meerut, and Delhi. All prominent reformers of the time were

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611 Ibid, p. 79.
612 Robinson, 'Religious Change and the Self in Muslim South Asia since 1800', p. 26
using print technology. Printing had become a weapon for them with which they could firstly defend themselves from attacks by Hindu revivalist movements and Christian Missionaries and secondly spread their orthodox beliefs and thoughts against un-Islamic concepts and practices in rituals, *tasawwuf* and customs of every day life. Therefore, they selected printing as a mean to update their nation in respect of Sufi traditions, socio-cultural practices, education and learning. They paid special attention on printing Islamic Literature and basic religious texts. Various presses took part in publishing religious literature, but some of them were prominent in this context. Matba`-i Siddiqui (Baraeli) established by Maulana Muhammad Ahsan Nanotvi (1825-1895), a follower of Shah Abd-ul Aziz and his movement, was very active in printing since 1862 and paid special attention to the publication of Persian classics and translations as well as polemic and the reform literature of Shah Waliullah of Delhi and his son Shah Abd-ul Aziz of Delhi and his followers. The source of printing provided a way to bring forward and to enhance Islamic learning and preserve its orthodox teachings of Islam to the next generations.  

The ulama turned simultaneously to the new presses of the period, asking them to contribute copies of each book they published. In response, not only famous Muslim publishers like the Matba`-i Mujtabai in Meerut, the Matab-i Siddiqi in Delhi (above mentioned), and the Nizami Press in Kanpur responded, but also Nawal Kishore hastened to provide help to the school, as he was interested in preserving Arabic and Persian and encouraging the use of Urdu. If printed books in Persian were used to educate and entertain, then they were also used as paper weapons in religious debates and controversies. For instance, in 1853 colonial officials in the North Western Provinces noted that some of the Persian printed works were controversial:

> Religious controversy between Hindus and Musalmans deals largely in invectives. On the side of the Musalman especially there is little argument, and no disposition to admit the idolatrous practices are a corrupt after-growth on what was once a pure theism. The work *Asal-i-din-Hindu*... is a sample of this kind of writing. It is

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a rejoinder (in Urdu poetry) to the *Tohfat-ul-Islam*, a work of much more pretension and originality, by a Hindu, written in Persian, with the view, as the author says, of being intelligible to a wider range of readers. This book again was a reply to the *Tohfat-ul-Hind*, a violent tirade against Brahmanism, professedly written by a Musalman convert from that religion. This may possibly be the case, for the work shows a familiarity with the grotesque mythology of the Hindus not common among the followers of Muhammad. After 1818 when British domination over India was firmly established, two Muslim missionary movements enhanced the use of vernacular language at the expenses of Persian. The first was Fara’izi movement in Bengal that utilized Bengali more than Urdu and Persian. The second is usually called *Tariqa-i Muhammadiya* or the *Mujahidin* movement. The first manifesto of the Wahhabi movement, *Sirat-ul Mustaqim* (a short account of the mystical doctrine of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (b.1786 d.1831), founder of the ‘The Way of the Prophet Muhammad’ (*Tariqah-i Muhamdiyah*), accompanied with his Sufi genealogy) was compiled Persian around 1818. Although, it has been argued by scholars that it is only with the popularity of the Wahhabi preachers that Urdu became an authorized language to discuss and explain religious matters but Persian was still the language of choice for revivalist ulama. The political doctrine of the movement was also stated in a treatise, the *Mansab-i Imamat* and in the letters of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi—both are in Persian. While the tract writers of the *Tariqa-i Muhammadi* increasingly used Urdu to target a mass Muslim readership, most religious tracts circulation in pre-1857 Northern India were still written in Persian.

Gaborieau states that ‘although Persian remained the most important language to express the doctrine of the Wahhabs, the publication of the *Taqwiyat-ul Iman* and of the translation of the *Sirat-ul Mustaqim*, raised Urdu to the level of an authoritative

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615 From the letter from M. Kempson, Director of Public Instruction, North-Western Provinces to R. Simpson, Officiating Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces, dated 22.02.1864, included in M. Kempson’s ‘Report on Native Press in the North-Western Provinces, for the Years 1862, 1863, 1864, and 1865’, in *Selections from the Records of Government North Western Provinces, Part XLIV, A R T I*, Allahabad: Printed at the Government Press, N. W. P., 1866.

616 For Muslim revivlist reaction to East India Company’s activities before 1857 mutiny see, Hardy, *Muslims of British India*, pp. 50-60.
language to express a theological doctrine. The *Sirat-ul Mustaqim (The Straight Path)* was compiled by Shah Muhammad Isma'il, Shah 'Abd-ul 'Aziz's nephew, in 1819. Written initially in Persian, it was soon translated into Urdu in order to reach a wider audience. The second work, the *Taqwiyat-ul Iman* or *Strengthening of the Faith*, was written directly in Urdu.

At this time, printed text of Quran and *hadith* were the first of any kind in the Muslim world. That was the time when the movements for religious reformers and Islamic identity started. Shah 'Abd-ul Aziz (1764-1824) wrote in both Arabic and Persian, tried to promote Islamic education among Muslims. He published widely his reforming literature, and the struggle and jihad movement of Syed Ahmad of Rae Bareli (1786-1831). His *fatwas* are all drafted in Persian. Particularly with the publication made possible by newly available printing presses, *fatwas* became one of their most important tools for teaching adherence to the Law. And also, *Malfuzat* and *kamalat-i Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz* are some references to contacts between he and various Europeans in Delhi which were written in Persian. However Persian continued to be the language of choice of the Wahhabi rather than Urdu.

We now move on to the use of Urdu by both Muslim and Christian polemicists against each other. Thus, from debates within a religion we move on to debates between religions.

**Muslim-Christian Polemics and the Language of Religious Disputation**

The first contact between evangelical Europeans and Muslims of the Mughal heartlands had certainly occurred very soon after the Company extended its activities to Delhi. Henry Martyn's first Urdu translation of the New Testament, which began to be

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617 Gaborieau, 'Late Persian, Early Urdu, p. 178-9.
618 Metcalfe, *Islamic Revival in British India*, p. 56.
619 Aqeel, 'Commencement of Printing in the Muslim World, p. 18.
620 Gaborieau, 'Late Persian, Early Urdu, p. 171.
disseminated from Calcutta shortly before the first Urdu translations of the Quran were penned by scholars of the Mardras-i Rahimiya in Delhi, provided the means to transform the 'ulama's perception of Christianity. 624 Missionary's preceptive toward vernacular language (Urdu) is quiet clear on following report passage of Memoir,

The Urdu language is next for consideration. It is the language of all the Muhammadan population of Hindustan, and in the cities and towns of Bengal also. Wherever Persian had been cultivated under the Muhammadan rule or by the British courts, Urdu has now taken its place, without reference to the province or district whether it be in Bengal or in Hindustan proper. The extent of population using the Urdu (with the Persian character) I have no means of ascertaining, but it must amount to some millions. It is besides the language of two royal courts, that of Dihli and that of Lucknow. It has very recently also become the language of a paraphrasitic translation of the Quran; and in spite of the utter aversion of pandits to utter a word of Persian or Arabic derivation in the exposition of their shasters, some Kayesths have given the shasters themselves both a Persian and an Urdu dress, though these are considered the jargon of the Mlechchhas. It must be confessed that all who are familiar with the Persian character know, in general, something of the language, and that to some the [Sacred Scripture] in Persian would be more acceptable. This will hold true only of a select party, a very small number whose rank, education, extensive reading, or official engagements make them feel more at home in the one than in the other; but by far the greater part of those who are acquainted with the Persian character know little of the language, and would not bear to be questioned as to the meaning of a single page in Persian composition. In Urdu they would feel an entire freedom. 625

624 Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, p. 102.
625 Memoir relative to the Progress of the Translations of the Sacred Scriptures in the year 1816, Serampore Mission Press, 1816, p. 17.
Madrasa-i Rahimiya was attracting scholars from all over northern India and beyond. The new readiness, initiated at the Madrasa-i Rahimiya, to study the Quran in vernacular translation, and the dissemination of devotional and polemical literature in Persian and Urdu to a wider readership by means of the lithographic presses which had recently been introduced in Delhi and the other cities, was to have important effects on the way the Christian ‘word’, also disseminated through local presses, would in its turn be received in the coming decades by Muslim in this religion.\(^\text{626}\) We shall examine this issue taking the careers of two individuals as example.

Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803–1865) was a Protestant missionary, who studied Arabic language and the Qur’an, and during his first appointment with the Church Missionary Society, at Shushi in Georgia, he quickly learned Armenian, Persian and the Tartar dialect of Turkish. During his travels, he was involved in the distribution of Christian literature and in controversial discussion with Muslims. During the twelve years which Pfander spent in the Russian Caucasus, in Baghdad, and in Iran before his transfer to India, he formulated the view on Islam and on Muslim civilization which would influence the evangelistic methods he later adopted in Agra. He also wrote and published, in Persian, three books on Christianity which were intended specially for Muslim readers. Among these, the Mizan-ul Haqq (Balance of the Truth) was the book which the missionaries and the Indian ‘ulama alike, would later regard as the starting point of the controversy between them, which remains until now the single most provocative. In the Miftah-ul Asrar (Key of Mysteries) and the Triq-ul Hayat (Way of Life) he gave separate and detailed attention to the doctrines which he considered to be essential to evangelical Christianity.\(^\text{627}\)

Pfander placed great emphasis on the efficacy of a technologically superior and socially progressive Europe in ensuring the eventual success of the Gospel. The introduction of the printing press and the establishment of some English and French-medium schools in Turkey and Iran, were already breaking the ‘ulama’s monopoly over

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\(^\text{626}\) Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, pp. 66-7.
\(^\text{627}\) Ibid, p. 138.
the minds of the masses. The circulation of Pfander’s book in both Persian and Urdu in Lucknow, and the preparation and publication from the royal press in that city of a series of refutation was the beginning of an era of prolonged tract warfare between Islam and Christianity in northern India. Already the manuscript Mizan-ul Haq was completed before the end of 1829 and was translated into Armenian and first published in Moscow in 1831. Four years later it was published in a Persian translation at Shusha. Persian editions, transliterated by Pfander as the Mizan-ul Hak/Mizan-ul Haq, were published in Shusha (1835), Calcutta (1839) and Agra (1849). Urdu editions were published in Mirzapur (1843) and Agra (1850). And also his Persian editions of the Miftah were published in Calcutta (1839) and Agra (1850). The Urdu translation of 1850 was the second ‘improved’ edition. Tariq-ul Hayat published in Persian in Calcutta (1840) and Agra (1847).

The other important figure in this debate was Rahmatullah Kairanvi (1818-91), a Muslim scholar and author of Ezhar-ul Haq, published in Arabic in 1864. He was one of the first to adopt Urdu for purposes of religious polemic, although some of his first publications were in Persian, and some of the accounts of his munazara with Pfander were later published simultaneously, but separately, in both languages. It is clear from his own comments that his adoption of Urdu reflected the growing trend in the mid nineteenth century to write in the ‘language of the people’, and that his retention of Persian reflected a unique situation in which Pfander, the catalyst on the missionary side, fluent in Persian than in Urdu. Thus, writing in Istanbul, Rahmatullah reminisced:

The reason for my writing in two languages [Persian and Urdu] was that the first language was extremely familiar among the Indian Muslims, and the second language was actually their mother tongue, and the paders who were residing in India and were going about preaching were certainly expert in the second language and were [only] somewhat acquainted with the first language, except

628 Pfander’s diary of journey to Tebris, September 1832-March 1833, in MM, No.4 (1837), pp. 438-9, cited in ibid, p. 155.
629 Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, pp. 139-144.
that padre who held the religious debate with me [pfander] who was more expert in the Persian language compared to Urdu. 630

Rahmatullah prepared a number of publications, each specifically designed to meet one or more of the various threats recently identified by fellow ‘ulama in Delhi and Agra. The first of these, the Azalat-ul Auham (Destroyer of Imaginations), written in Persian and published in Delhi 1852-3, was a long and detailed reply to Pfander’s Mizan, on the margins of which, Munsif Al-i Hasan’s Kitab-i Istifsar, was also reprinted. At approximately the same time he was also preparing for publication in Urdu the Azalat-ul Shukuk (Destroyer of Doubts), a two volume work. 631

Henry Martyn’s pioneering achievement in translating the New Testament into Arabic, Persian and Urdu had been the starting point for a process of continuous retranslation and revision which had escalated rapidly in the 1840. Yet comparison of the Arabic, Persian and Urdu Bibles cited by Al-i Hasan in the early 1840s, with those cited by Rahmatullah from 1852 onwards, demonstrates both the rapid dissemination of several new translations during the intervening decade, and more significantly for this study, the new uses to which the ‘ulama were equipped by 1854 to put Biblical Knowledge. ‘ulama had by the early 1850s acquired almost all the new translations and editions in these languages, as well as some editions in English (public religious debate). 632 On the debate on tahrif (refutation) of the Bible and ‘ulama’s reaction which was reinforced by the publication of verbatim accounts of the debate, in both Persian and Urdu, and from presses in both Agra and Delhi, and by the completion of Maulana Rahmatullah’s detailed book on the taharif issue, the I’jaz-i ‘Isawi. The first to appear was entitled, Al-bahs al-sharif fi asbat al-nash wal tahrif (A noble disputation in proof of abrogation and corruption), which was published in Persian, from Delhi, before the end of September 1854, before, that is, correspondence by letter between the disputants had finally been broken off. 633

631 Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, p. 254. On the debated of it see ibid, p. 226.
633 Ibid, p. 254. On the debated of it see ibid, pp. 242-262.
Shiism and Print Technology in India

The establishment of Shi’ite states also played a major role in the continuation of Perso-Islamic culture. First Murshidabad arose as a major commercial centre and seat of the governors of Bengal; at the same time Hugli came to be favoured by long-distance traders from Iran. Bengal offered growing opportunities to emigrants from Iran. When the East India Company took power in the 1760s, these Iranians turned to Awadh where, from 1722, another Shi’a regional kingdom had begun to flourish. This court, which was established by Sayyids from Nishapur, grew steadily more Shi’ite in its institutions and culture. From the 1760s the Nishapuri nawabs began to gather Shi’ite ‘ulama around them.\(^{634}\)

Persian had vital influence on Shia ritual practices specifically in Awadh. In the early nineteenth century Persian prose text was constituted part of *Muharram* ceremony that described the sufferings of Imam Husayn and his supporters. This ritual was quite popular among the Persian-educated notable class in Awadh.\(^{635}\) Persian reading of ‘ten session’(*dah majlis*), from the manuscript documents\(^{636}\), was rendering in different style of *hadith khvani*\(^{637}\) which was the sessions of high *ulama* in recitation of martyr’s suffering more closely to Arabic oral reports from the Imams.\(^{638}\) Ali wrote about the height of the popularity of the *marsiya* (elegy, dirge).\(^{639}\) After the refreshments, specialized reciters

\(^{634}\) Robinson, *Ulama of Farangi Mahall*, pp. 24-5.


\(^{637}\) Within a few years of the Safavids coming to power, a book describing the martyrs of Karbala became very popular in Iranian mourning rituals. This was the *Rawzat al-Shuhada* [*The Garden of the Martyrs*] written in Persian by Husayn Waiz Kashifi (d. 910/1504). This book, containing many quotations from Persian poetry, was to exert a great influence on the development of the *majlis*. For two centuries it became the standard vehicle for conveying the memory of Karbala. Passages from it were recited, becoming known as *rawza khvani* [recitation from the *Rawza*], and so common was the practice that the *majlis* reciter was simply called a *rawza khwan* [reciter of the *Rawza*]. See: Toby Howarth, *The Twelver Shia as a Muslim Minority in India: Pulpit of Tears*, Routledge, Birmingham, 2005, p. 9.


\(^{639}\) The art of composing and reciting *marsiya* was brought from the Deccan to North India where it reached its peak under the two poets Mir Anis (d. 1291/1874) and Mirza Dabir (d. 1292/1875). The North Indian *marsiya* was also popular because it drew on local imagery. As C.M. Naim observes ‘The heroes and heroines are Arabs but they behave like the gentle-folks of Lucknow. Their social mores, marriage customs, uniqueness of feminine speech habits, family relationships, these are all Indian, specifically of the
chanted elegiac poetry marşıya in Hindustani.\(^{640}\) 'Hyaatool Kaaloob'/Hayat-ul Qulub (Enlightener of the Heart) a Persian work in prose by Mirza Mahumud Baqir esteemed by the learned Muslim. This work contains the life and acts of every known prophet from the Creation, including also Mohammad and twelve Imams. It was written first in Arabic, and afterwards translated by author into Persian language, for wider consumption.\(^ {641}\)

In early nineteenth century Lucknow, however, two relatively recent innovations, one Sunni and one Shi'a, seem to have coalesced to produce a style of apologetics and polemics which was more than usually indebted to madrasa induced scholasticism. The first of these was the emphasis in the Dars-i Nizamiya syllabus followed in the Frangi Mahal, the Sunni seminary founded at the end of Aurangzeb's reign, on the rational science of logic and philosophy. Much has been made of the Firangi Mahal leaning toward ma'qulat, in contrast to the Delhi madrasa's emphasis on manqulat, through renewed attention to tafsir and hadith.\(^ {642}\) Shi'i clerics also engaged in intellectual contest with the West on another front: polemics against Christian missionaries,\(^ {643}\) and the Wahhabi movement.

In late eighteenth century Shi'a scholarly circles of Lucknow the Usuli rationalist modes of evaluating religious 'truth' and doctrine re-emerged which had first evolved in 'Abbasid times, but which were to play for the first time a significant part in Muslim-Christian disputation in Lucknow context of munazara.\(^ {644}\) Among them was a letter from a Lucknow 'alim, named Sayyid 'Abdullah Sabzawari, about whom Pfander could

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\(^ {640}\) Ali, Observations on the Mussulmans of India, p. 23.

\(^ {641}\) It has been partly translated into English by J. L. Merrick, Boston, 1850. Ali, Observations on the Mussulmans of India, p. 77.

\(^ {642}\) Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, p. 175.

\(^ {643}\) See Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny, pp.117-130. By the time that contact was resumed in the 1840s the context would have changed: munazara conducted in royal courts according to long-established adab etiquette would be replaced, in an atmosphere of growing unease about intrusive British policies and missionaries expansion, by bitter and sometimes abusive exchanges through letters and tracts as of old, but also utilizing the new media of newspaper articles and bazaar diatribe. There was a new catalyst too, in the person of a German missionaries (Pfander), skilled in Arabic and Persian as well as in Urdu, who, newly determined to draw out the 'ulama from mosque, madrasa and shrine to hear his arguments for the truth of Christianity and the falsity of Islam, would adopt unprecedented methods to secure this end. Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, p. 131.

\(^ {644}\) Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India, p. 175.
discover no details, enclosing ‘Ten Perfect Question’ about the Trinity, the format of which seemed designed, as had often been the case in medieval encounters on this subject, to entrap the missionary in verbal inconsistencies and thus expose the doctrine as ‘absurd’. Pfander answered the questions, and later published both questions and answers in Urdu, although the original letter had been in Persian.645

The Shiite mujtahids in responded to Pfander by newly published Maulana Muhammad Hadi’s Kashf-ul Asrar (Lucknow 1845), the first, and probably only point-by-point refutation of Pfander’s Miftah ever to be written. Thus, the opening up of religious discussion had proved equally satisfying to both the mujtahid and the missionary. When Pfander mistook the mujtahid’s remarks about his Persian style as a compliment to his arguments, the latter was quick to emphasize that ‘truth and falsehood are related to subject matter and meanings not to diction and construction’, and that Pfander’s works merely appeared to be superior to those of other missionaries because he had managed to acquire the mercenary collaboration of some Persian scholars.646

In early time, Nasirabadi (as Lucknow’s prayer leader after 1786) started teaching religious text books to many students, having one of them translate it from Arabic to Persian.647 Later Sayyid Dildar Ali devoted himself to an Urdu Shi’ite commentary on the Quran, printed in 1840.648 Also, early use of the printing press in Awadh made Shi’ite authors accessible to readers in the Middle East.649 The Imami clerics in Lucknow used their own publication in Persian and later in Urdu to dominate ideology that bound together the Shi’ite propertyed classes.650 Cole had argued that the printing press spread standard shiite religious ideas and practice—as opposed to the development of sectarian folk Shiitepractice—and thereby made clear communal identity.651

645 ibid. p. 171.
646 Sayyid Muhammad’s second letter to Pfander (1845), cited in ibid, p. 172.
647 Cole. Roots of North Indian Shi’as in Iran and Iraq., p. 160.
649 ibid. p. 214.
650 ibid. p. 219.
Sayyid Muhammad Hadi’s *Kashf–ul Asrar*, published in Lucknow in 1845 and unequivocally ‘rational’ in all its assumptions, seemed to represent the extreme antithesis of the *Miftah-ul Aasra*’s central thesis of Divinity and Trinity ‘mysterious’ in nature.\(^{652}\) Meanwhile, Al-i Hasan’s eight hundred page rejoinder, the *Kitab-i Istifsar* (in refutation of Pfander’s arguments both in the *Mizan-ul Haq* and his letters), rhetorically entitled ‘Book of Questions’ was ready for publication in Lucknow. (1845). Like the Shi’a ‘ulama’s *Kashf-ul Asrar*, Al-i Hasan’s monumental *Kitab* was daunting in length and repetitive in content, yet it was written in Urdu, and in a much simpler style than the *mujtahid’s* Persian refutations. Unlike the Shi’a works, it would later be utilized by other north Indian ‘ulama who took up the gauntlet against Pfander.\(^{653}\)

The earliest and most substantial refutations of the Wahhabi doctrine were written in Persian. They consist mainly of three books. The first was written around 1822 by a Shia, Musharraf Ali entitled *Izahat al-ghayy fir add-i ‘Abd al-Hayy*. Two others books were Fazl Haq Khairabadi’s *tahqiq al-fatwa fi ibtal at-taghwa* (1825) and a short pamphlet of Isma’il Shahid’s *Risala-yi yak rozi* (1825).\(^{654}\) A large amount of polemical literature in Persian against the Wahhabis was produced by the Naqshbandi Sufis of Delhi.\(^{655}\) Syed Ahmad Khan also vindicated the Naqshbandi view on a technical point—the validity of meditation on the image of one’s Shaikh—by issuing a short tract in Persian. The pro-and anti Wahhabi polemical literature in Urdu was to grow considerably after 1857.\(^{656}\) The hagiography of the movement was also first written in Persian, as for instance the *Makhzan-i Ahmadi* (1845) and the *Tarikh-i Ahmadiyya* (1855), the earliest books on the subject.\(^{657}\)

In Calcutta a most remarkable work on the history, traditions and basic tenets of Shiism was published in 1800 and titled *Tuhfa-i Athna Ashariya*. It was written by Shah

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\(^{652}\) Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, p. 175.
\(^{653}\) Ibid, p. 189.
\(^{654}\) Gaborieau, ‘Late Persian, Early Urdu’, p. 179.
\(^{655}\) Ibid, p. 179-80.
\(^{656}\) Ibid, p. 180.
\(^{657}\) Ibid, p. 181.
Abdul Aziz Dehlawi. Two volumes dealing with the philosophy and doctrines of Shiism were written: *Sawarim-i Ilahiyyat wa Husam Al Islam* [sic] by Sayyid Dildar Ali known as *Ghufran Ma‘ab* published in 1803 in Calcutta.

As mentioned earlier, in the first half of the nineteenth century Shi‘a-Sunni polemics reached their peak in Delhi through the activities of Shah ‘Abd-ul ‘Aziz’s disciples, Maulana Muhammad Rashidu’d-Din Khan Dihlawi and Maulvi Hafiz Haydar ‘Ali Fyzabadi. A unique spirit of tolerance and Sunni-Shi‘a amity was engendered, however, by Maulana Agha Muhammas Baqir Dihlawi. In about 1825 Maulana Baqir joined the Delhi College which offered a combined western and oriental education. In 1834 he bought a second-hand Urdu press from Delhi College. He gave his business a variety of names such as the Matba‘-i Ja‘fariyya (Ja‘fariyya Press). The Matba‘-i Isna‘Ashariya (Isna‘Ashariya Press) and lastly the Matba‘-i Urdu Akhbar (Urdu Newspaper Press). The Maulana appointed competent managers, irrespective of religious and sectarian considerations, and became a successful printer. In 1835 he started the weekly Dihli Urdu Akhbar (Delhi Urdu Weekly) which continued to appear until 3 September 1857.

Another important figure in the history of publishing was Maulana Rajab Ali, better known as Aristujeh, was an ardent Shi‘a missionary. His efforts strengthened Shi‘a morale. At Ludhiana he established an Urdu litho press called the Majma‘u’l-Bahrayn. A large number of Shi‘a books were published including the remarkable *Tahyid-u ‘l-mata’in* by Mufti Muhammad Quli.

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659 Ibid.
661 Ibid. p. 104.
Conclusion

The process by which Persian lost its pre-eminent position was a long and – as we have hoped to have shown in this chapter complin. It involved many players, and not – as is commonly believed – the British colonial state alone. Scholars of Shah Waliu’llah’s family and men of letters in various Muslim courts, Christian missionaries, learned societies, and of course the East India Company, all played their part in progressively substituting Urdu for Persian as an authoritative language.

After 1857, the ratio of Persian to Urdu was reversed. In the famous seminary of Deoband, founded in 1867, Urdu was the medium of instruction. Most important, the Deoband School continued the use of Urdu, not Persian, as medium of instruction, and it thus shared in the general trend of times toward the development of the modern vernaculars. The many collections of fatwas which appeared from the second half of the nineteenth century inward were no longer in Persian as in former times. It should finally be emphasized that for biographical literature (biographies and biographical dictionaries) concerning 'ulama and Sufis, Urdu replaced Persian after 1857.

For educated Muslims, especially of northern India, the decline of Persian was accompanied by the increasing prominence of Urdu throughout the nineteenth century as the language of literary and religious expression. Urdu, rather than Persian, became the medium of instruction in most madrasas, and it was principally in this language that Muslim scholars debated, wrote and published. The religious reformers not only preached and debated but were among the first to take advantage of the new printing presses of the day. Through the presses, they played an important role in developing Urdu as a prose language. As noted above, religious leaders had taken part in the creation of Urdu poetry in the eighteenth century; their contribution to the creation of Urdu prose was no less important. Urdu was very much the product of the cosmopolitan society of religious leaders, courtiers, and literatures. The role of the reformers of the 1820s and 1830s in shaping the language in this direction was substantial. Their goal was to reach a popular audience, not limited to those accustomed to the subtleties of Persian diction.
The role of print by that time, when print media was flourishing in India and in the Islamic world, there were many motives active to let Islam face the challenges of contemporary world and make Islam and its ideologies, some how, contemporaneous and modernistic in various Islamic thinkers and even ulamas. The most important and tough experience for Islam was its clash with the West. It was the press and contemporary print media which boosted the efforts of expended the success of what Muslim intelligentsia and thinkers to reconstruct or reshape Islamic thoughts and concepts in reaction to the challenges of the modern world. Besides, the media helped the masses too, to be motivated themselves for social and political movements. Not one, but a multitude of factors thus explain the historical change this chapter has investigated.