The Prolific Personality of Azad Bilgirami

It is one of the Significant features of the writings of Bilgirami that he himself provides much knowledge about his own biography and therefore we could easily trace the biographical sketch through the scattered contents of his various books.

Life

Whenever an attempt for a comprehensive history of India shall be undertaken, the fact can not be ignored that Muslims India had produced several eminent personalities and the scholars who contributed to beautify of multicultured face of India. These noteworthy personalities brought out their voluminous works in different branches of Islamic learnings such as “Tafseer” (Commentary and explanation of Quran) “Hadith” (the utterances and the practices of the Holy prophet) “Fiqh” (Jurisprudence of Islamic theology). History, logic and philosophy. Besides they also contributed in various branches of knowledge like Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology, Music, etc. Amongst these high caliber personalities one of the towering figure who contributed much to Indian heritage and used all his instincts to glorify the Indian traditions is Ghulam Azad Bilgirami, who shall always highly be regarded for his prideworthy contribution. He was born in Bilgiram. The Bilgiram (at present is the headquarters of the subdivision bearing the same name. It has produced many scholars and officials who attained name and fame during their life time) (1) is a very old town now includes in the district of Hardoi. It was formally called Srinagar after the name of the ruler of the place “Sri” Shah Hamza the author of Sas’sa’l-Al-Kalimat says that this name was current among the common people till his time.

At Srinagar there was “Bayl” originally brought from Kashmir when Srinagar was conquered by the Muslims. The name of the place was changed to “Baylgram” after the name of the idol. In course of time it came to be called by its Present name Bilgiram. (2)
According to another legend quoted by Shibli Nomani runs as under;

"بلغرام مین جس قدر و اسطع سادات آباد بہو ان کی مورث اعلی جو بلغرام مین آکر آباد بوہی پی. سید محمد صغیری بہو وہ خواجہ قطب الدین بختیار کلکی کی مرید تھی اور سلطان شمس الدین التمہ کی دربار سے تعلق رکھتی تھی. 614 ه م بلغرام پر اپیں پنڈو راجا قابض تھا. جس کا نام سری تھا اور جو نہایت متعصب اور سرکش تھا 616 م م محمد صغیری اس کی سرکوبی کی لئی تهوزی سی فوج لے کر روہاں بوہی اور بلغرام کی قرب پہنچ کر راجا سے معرکہ اور بوہی راجا معزین اور اقراب شکست سی دوچار بوا اور محمد صغیری کا اطراف بلغرام اور بلغرام پر پورا تسلط بوہیا. اس واقعہ کی تاریخ خداداد سے نکلتی پی. "(3)

(The grand ancestors of all those Wasti Saadat who are rehabilitated in Biligiram is Sayyed Muhammed Sughra, who came and stayed in Biligiram. He was the disciple of Sayyed Khutbuddin Bakhtiyar kaki and was associated with the court of Shamsuddin Altamash. In 614 A.H. Biligiram was ruled by a Hindu Raja, whose name was ‘Sri’ and who was most prejudiced and rebellious. In 614 A.H. sayyed Muhammed Sughra alongwith few Armymen started to punish him and near Biligiram he fought with the Raja. The Raja was assasinated and he captured the Biligiram totally. The chronogram of this event is ‘Khuda-Dad’.

In support to this legend we present one more statement by Syed Muhammad Ahmed Biligirami which states as under;

"مخفی مباد دارالاسلام قصبه بلغرام را اول نام سری نکریوده منسوب بسیری رام راجا کہ کافر سخت متعصب بوہد حضرت سید محمد ملقب مصاحب الدعوت صغیری اجداد سادات بلغرام درسی شش صد و جہانگیر دھ بجری بدستور سلطان محمد شمس الدین التمہ مرحموم سری رام راجا راپا اقارب و عیال و سپاہ بقیل رساندیند و مانه تاریخ فتح لفظ ‘خداداد’ است و آن سید موصوف در آنجا متوطن کریدیند و بعد سی و یک سال تاریخ جہانگیر دہم ماه شعبان المعموم سن شق صد و چیل و پنج بجری بعالم قدس خرامیذند و آن مرج البحرین فيضتا باذ صوري و منصوری مرید
From the abstract of above manuscript it seems that it is rather correct and Shibli Noman has mistaken because the word ‘Sri’ is used in place of ‘Mr’ as in English language and the complete name of the ruler might be Sriram. Shibli goes on to narrate the story as under;

"سيد محمد صفري نے بھی اپنی ایک اخلاق کرلی شیوخ فرشوری اور ترکمان جو ان کی ساتھ ان کی بھی بہ توغ یہ آباد ہو گیا۔ اس زمانہ میں مال گزانت کا طریقہ یہ تھا کہ غلہ کی پیداور کا دسوائیا کا سوسائیا لیا جاتا تھا۔ جس کو ہی کی کبھی تھا۔ چنانچھا محبون میں محمد شاہ بن سلطان فیروزشاہ دبی کے فرمان کی جو عبارت مولوی غلام علی آزاد نے مائر الكرام میں نقل کی ہے اس کے لیے اغوا پہنچا۔ چنانچھا در عبد سلطان عافیہ عشیر عوین غلہ دادہ اندم برآں جملہ بدبند۔"

(5) مولوی غلام علی آزاد ان پر سید محمد کی اولاد میں سبیل۔

(Sayyed Muhammed Sughra opted to stay here and the Shaikhs and Turkoman who came alongwith him also rehabilitated here. In those days the revenue system was that, 1/10th of the crop was collected by the king and to which they used to called ‘Yaki’ and the words of the ‘farman’ of Mehmud Bin Muhammed Shah Bin Sultan feroz Shah of Delhi which were quoted by Maulvi Gulam Ali Azad Bilgirami in ‘Ma’asir-ul-Kiram’ are as under:
However during the reign of past sultante one tenth share of the total foodgrains were being collected through India. This farman was issued in the name Muhammed Sughra. Sayyed Muhammed Sughra in 805 A.H. constructed a fort in Bilgiram and ruled for 31 years, then after he died in 645 A.H. Maulavi Gulam Ali Azad Bilgirami was the decendent of the Sayyed Muhammed).

Syed Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgirami, Wasti, Hussaini, Hanfi Chishti (6) was born on Sunday the 25th Safar 1116 A.H (7) (29th June 1704 A.D) in Mohalla Maidan Pura. (8) It is said that his grand father Mir Muhammad Feroz Proposed his name as Ghulam-e-Ilahdad (Ilahdad was the name of his great grand father) which gives the chronogram of the date of birth. Our author Azad Bilgirami himself consider Muhammad Sugra as his ancestral father however his genealogical links goes back to Isa' Molumul-ul-Ashyal Bin Zaid Bin Imam Zainul Aabedeen". In support to his statement we present one of the couplet of our author;

\[
\text{گرچه باشد موتم الاشیال عیسی جدمن} \\
\text{عیسی جان بخش شیرانم بامدرد نفس}
\]

(9)

(My family belonged to ‘Motam-ul-Ashiyal Bin Zaid Bin Martyr, Zainul-Abidin. I say my grandfather, ‘Motam-ul-Ashiyal, ‘Isa’ and I am also such a tiger who by the power of respiration can alive the dead one.)

According to another legend “In the regime of Bahool Lodhi his father had migrated from Samdan a small town in the district of Faruqhabad and settled in Bilgiram where they were received by other Wasti Sayyeds. Azad’s grand father Mir Feroz Ali was a great warrior. His father Syed Muhammad Noah was in the service of Nawab Mubarriz-ul-Mulk Sirbuland Khan Tuni and had served for many years as "Mir Samaani" (10) He was married one of the daughter of Mir Abdul Jaleel Bilgirami, who was a great scholar of the time (11) Syed Noah Bilgirami had three Sons. Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgirami, Ghulam Hasan and Ghulam Imam Sadeqh. Azad had two brothers and two sons - Noor-ul-Hasan and Ghulam Shah Mardan. Noorul Hasan died of drowing in his youth. (12) He has composed an Elegy on his sad demise, in the year 1668 A.H.(1755 A.D) as mentioned in Khazan-e-
Aamirah;

Azad dar merziye farzand khod meer nur al-husnain ke dar 1188 H tham non stin
Wamathe wa alf antaqal kerdhe gftite - (13-A)

(Azad wrote an elegy on the demise of his son, Noor-ul-Husnain, who
died in 1168 A.H.)

The Elegy begins with the couplet as under;

Qiimah bersar ayn bostan rft
Ke ik ghl daasth amn nqgan rft

(13-B)

(The climatly passed from head of this garden and a flower in the very
begining of its age passed away.)

He (Noor-ul-Hasan) left a son named Ameer Hyder who later
became Mufii of Calcutta presidency court. The other brother Shah
Mardan died on 30th Muharram 1155 A.H.(1742 A.D.) on his way to
Mecca when the boat in which he was traveling was attacked by the
Marathas. Azad composed the following quartrain commemorating
his death;

Tar nzms gftste shrm brdm
Barwzi mraaeskste zrm brdm
Dag astm lm kft nmr bsmr
Namd bgnastnd nrm brdm

(14)

(The string of my soul was broken and my voice was taken away. My
arms are broken and my energy is vanished. My burns are still exist
but my light has been taken away.)
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Thus the table of Genealogy can be drawn as under:

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Mir Muhammad Ilahdad
   └── Mir Muhammad Feroz
      └── Mir Muhammad Nuh
           └── Mir Ghulam Ali Azad
               └── Mir Ghulam Hasan
                   └── Mir Ghulam Imam Sadiq
                      └── Mir Ghulam Shah Mardan
                          └── Mir Nurul Hasan
                              └── Mir Ghulam Mir Aulad
                                  └── Muhammad Zaka
                                      └── Mir Mufti Amir Hyder
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Azad’s family both paternally and maternally was considered prominent in the field of learning and education. They were highly respected by the people. According to the tradition they used to run a Madrsta for the benefit of common people.

Azad received his education in ‘Kutub-e-Darsia’ under Mir Tufail Muhammad of Atravli who was a renowned scholar of the time, and has spent nearly 72 years (15) of his life in imparting knowledge and instructions. Azad and his maternal cousin Mir Muhammad Yousuf both were the classmates and used to take the lessons from this scholar. Azad has given an interesting description of the system of education prevailing in those days. Bilgirami writes;

" طريق تحصيل جنین بود گه پیسونه دو کتاب یا کتابی واحد ازدو مقام بسماعت و قرآنی یکدیگر، خواندنیم و شدنیم سعی در معماری زنده اگر اخیانی یکی را عارضه رومی داد سبق دیگری در معرض تویف می‌افتاد و در وقت اقامت وطن و کسب علوم چنین اوقات در افادة طلبه نیز حرف گردید. " (16)

(It was customary for brilliant senior students who had acquired the preliminary knowledge of the subject to teach and impart knowledge to their junior schoolmates. Thus the burden of maintaining many

Historical Sensitivity and Sensibility of Azad Bilgirami's Works  [ 42 ]
teachers was lessened and at the same time the relation between the
schoolmates and teachers was established on the same footing as
between the teacher and the taught) (17) This custom was also
followed by Azad.

After his early education he received instruction in literature,
rhetorics and prosody from his maternal uncle, Mir Muhammad. In
the year 1134 A.D. (1721-22 A.D.) He set out his first journey in the
company of Mir Azmat-ulah Bekhaber. (18) and his maternal cousin
Mir Muhammed Yousuf to Delhi where his maternal grandfather was
in the service of Sultan Muhammad Shah. He remained there for two
years studying different branches of knowledge such as traditions
(Hadiths) exegesis, Lexicography and poetic art. Azad himself informs
us and states;

آزاد ما که فضل و کمال بمی‌ساند
خدمت نمود حضرت عبدالجلیل را

19
(The eminence and excellence what so ever possessed by Azad is
perceived by Hazrat Abdul Jaleel.)

and he further writes;
لغت و حديث و سیر نبوی و فنون ادب از خدمت قدسی منزلت جدی و
استثنای حضرت علیمه میر عبدالجلیل بلگرام اخ نمود. ”(20)
(The knowledge of grammer, Hadith, Hegeography of the prophet,
arts and literature was sought by my maternal grandfather and the
tutor, Hazrat Allama Mir Abdul Jaleel Bilgirami.)

Mir Abdul Jaleel Bilgirami was very much pleased with the
capacities of Azad and always used to tell;

امید په تم سے میری یاد گار قائم رہ جائی. ”(21)
(Hoped, by you my commoration would be established.)

It was in the very nature of Azad that he could not stay for a long
time at a single place. However, in his early age he undertook three
major journeys and they are important and proved to be turning
periods in his career. His maternal grand father, Mir Abdul Jaleel
Bilgirami who had left Bilgiram sixteen years earlier, returned in 1132 A.H (1719-20 A.D.) He stayed for one year at home and started for Delhi (22 A).

In the year 1725 he took oath of allegiance at the hands of Mir Sayyed Lutfullah Hussaini Wasti Bilgirami alias “Shah Luddah Bilgirami”, who was the father of Mir Azmatullah Bekhabar Bilgirami. (22B). The second important journey undertaken by Azad was at Siwistan in Sindh. His maternal uncle, Mir Muhammad Sha‘ir was working there since 1133 A.H. as a Waqhai Nigar “chronicle writer” and ‘Mir Bakshi’ (pay master general) “It seems that his post was retained for long time by Azad’s family. His maternal grand father was appointed by Aurangzeb in the year 1116 A.H. followed by Muhammad Ashraf, Mir Akram and lastly by Azad’s father who served as substitute for seven years(23). In the course of time his uncle Mir Muhammad Sha‘ir wanted to return back to his home to his relatives. So he proposed his nephew Azad to work in his absence in the capacity as his ‘Naib’. Azad left Bilgiram for Sevestan in Zilha 1142 A.H. and reached Lahore on 29th Muharram 1143 A.H. Here he met Faqirullah Afrin (d.1154 A.H./1741 A.D.), who was a famous poet of the town. Thereafter Azad proceeded to Multan, he reached there on the 10th Rabi-ul-Awwal (24).

During his stay of four years at Sevestan Bilgirami got the chance to prove himself as the budding poet and started writing a chronic of persian poets, which was later completed and still remembered as ‘Yad-e-Baiza’. It was praised by the scholars and received favourably in literary circles.(25). After completing four years’ stay at Sevestan when his uncle reached there and rejoined his services as Waqhai Nigar and Mir Bakshi, Azad started towards Delhi from Sevestan in 1147 A.H. (1734 A.D.) After reaching Delhi Azad came to know that his parents along with his family members were residing at Allahabad since 1144 A.H.-(26). So he started for Allahabad and reached there on 1st Ramzan(27). Azad remained in Allahabad for two years and collected fresh material for Yad-e-Baiza and prepared a second copy of the same. During his stay of two years at Allahabad, he visited Bilgiram twice(28) Here Abdul Jabbar Malkapurri state that ‘he stayed three years at Allahabad and visited twice to Bilgiram but it seems that he is mistaken.
At this juncture Malkapuri quotes “Lakshaminarayan Shafiq Aurangbadi, author of Gul-e-Rana stating that Azad himself narrating the following story which runs as under;

Mir Samani of Nawab Shahnawaz Khan. One day my father took me and my brother Mir Gulam Hussain to Nawab Shahnawaz Khan for the purpose of the service. Nawab was sitting in the banglow of Murtuza and father was obtaining his signatures on paper by standing nearer to him. We both the brothers were waiting for his due attention by standing in the chamber. That as soon as the Nawab pay attention towards us we greet him. The Nawab was so busy in putting the signatures on the papers that he did not see us for long time, although the ‘chobdars’ cried as per the tradition loudly and inspite of this, the Nawab did not pay the attention towards us. At that time the sense of honour and shame invoked in my heart and thought that it is waste to be humiliated at the doors of any of the creatures. Whatever be given from ultimate creature is better. Anda I returned back from the place of greetings. Chobdar asked ‘where I was going’ I replied ‘to the house’. It is the manners of Chobdars that they prevent to those who are coming and never prevent to those who were going. Chobdar did not prevent me. I reached to the house and my brother stayed there, then after he was graced by the service. When the father returned from the court to the house. He asked me that I have denied the service of the Nawab finally what you would do, I replied I will work according to destiny.

In this regards Shibli state that;

"پچھن میں کہیں خواب دیکھنا تھا کہ جناب رسولہ کے دیدار کا شرف حاصل بھی ہے آی اندرون بی اندرون سلگتی رہی ۔" (30)

(In infancy he viewed the holy Prophet in the dream. It was burning (without smoke) inside my heart)

It was the third important journey which was undertaken by Azad for the pilgrimage to Mecca on Monday, the 3rd Rajjab, 1150 A.H.(1737 A.D.) (31) Without informing any one he left Bilgiram on foot bound for sacred place. After three days when the news became known Azad’s younger brother Ghulam Hasan went after him but finding no trace, he returned disappointed after three stages.(32) The chronogram composed by Azad for this Pilgrimage is ‘Safar-e-khair’(33)
During the course of journey he faced many hardships. He deliberately avoided the straight path and traveled through odd routes so that no one could trace him. Thus Shibli states:

(He opted the un-introduced path leaving an ordinary way and therefore he faced several hardships in the forest as he wrote the events of journey in one ‘Masnavi’. The chronogram of which is ‘Tilm-e-Azam’ (the great magic)

Its path is like a sleeping snake, the bite of which would not stand on its foot.

The decoits of this path snatch (the wealth) from even the beggars and their skirts are entangled with the air of the path.)
The Prolific Personality

Inspite I was without friend and supporter I completed this journey. I walked till the days of Haj and was wounded with the bleeding. All the ways were in between the mountains and the forests of unequal surface, it was difficult to put a single step on it.

On every step several rivers were there and every path was dangerous like the sharp edge of sword.

The waves of blood and the burns of bristers made the path colourful for me.)

Shibli further writes;

"بلگرام سے سروںج تک جو مالودہ کم اضلاع مین ب پیادہ پا سفر کیا - نوبت یہ پہنچی کہ پاون مین آنے آئے پرگی اور قدم رکھنا مشکل پوگیا "

(35)

(From Bilgiram to Saronge, which is under the districts of Malwa travelled on foot. The condition reached to the extent that (he) got bristers on foot and became very difficult to step further.)

In the course of his journey, he reached in the vicinity of Malva, where Nawab Asif Jah was engaged in a war with the Marathas.(36) One of the army men after getting information, received Azad respectfully and treated him as a guest. He also provided a horse. (37) At the same time Azad got a chance to see Nawab Nizamul Mulk. He composed a quatrains in praise of the Nawab seeking his help for the Pilgrimage. The quatrains is as follows;

لا حامی دین محبیت جود و احسان
حق داد ترا خطاب آصف شاїان
او تخت بدرگی سلیمان آورد
تو آل نبی را مدر کعبه رسان

(Oh! The protector of faith, guardian of favour and kindness, truly the title of ‘Soloman’s minister’ implicit in you, who had brought the
throne for him, you, send me, the offspring of the prophet to Ka'aba.)

After presenting this quatrain Nawab Asif Jah pleased very much. During these days Bilgirami took practical part in warfare thus Azad very proudly writes;

من بیم آن روز در صف اسلام
بابیکی دولتی خون آشام
قدم بردن افسیر دم
کرده از کام تا جگر بربان
سفر کهی و صیام و جهد
این سه دولت مراسم روداد

(I, myself was present with my sword in the lanes of Islamic warriors on that tyrannous day, with all my determination I attacked on the enemies of Islam. I finished my thirst of the fasting of Ramzan with the blood of the kings. The fasting, the journey to Mecca and ‘Jihad’ (holy war) all these three wealths came to me.)

In the last days of Ramzan, the Nawab Nizam-ul-Mulk entered into a peace agreement with the Marathas and the war came to an end. Nawab Asif Jah provided him with all necessary facilities including a purse of five hundred rupees in cash (40) In support to this statement Fazlur-rahaman Nadvi quoted the words in Sharaif-e-Osmani which are as under;

"نواب معزی الالیه پانصد روپیه زادره عناایت فرمود" (A-41)

(The said respected Nawab rewarded five hundred rupees for my travel expenses.)

Azad sailed from Surat on 24th of Ziquat reaching Jeddah on the 18th Muharram 1151 A.H. (41B) During his stay at Allahbad Azad had made the acquaintance of the well known Shaikh Muhammad Faakir who had preceded him on the Pilgrimage and was present at Jeddah to receive him. Azad reached Mecca on 29th Muharram
1151 A.H. (42). Fazal-ur-Rahman gave the date of reaching of Azad at Mecca as on 23rd. But the earlier date seems to be correct. After performing the rites of the Umara he left for Madina. After three days’ stay at Mecca, he arrived at Madina on 25th Safar 1151 A.H. (1738 A.D.) (43) In Madina, he studied Sahi Al-Bukhari under the able guidance of Muhammad Hayat Sindhi who had settled there and obtained a testimonial competency to Sih-eh-Sittah (the 6 most authentic and important books of Hadith) and all the ‘Mufarradat’ in the course of studies. (44A) After studying for nearly eight months in Madina, he left for Mecca on the 14th Shawwal and reached there on the 26th Shawwal of the same year i.e 1151 A.H. (1738 A.D) During his stay at Mecca, he took lessons in various subjects of Islamic Theology from Shaikh Abdul Wahab Tantanvi (d.1157 A.H./1744 A.D.) a well versed Muhddith and Scholar, he then performed the Haj for that occasion he composed a chronogram ‘Amal-e-Aazam’ (great deed) that comes 1151 A.H./1738 A.D. In Rabi-us-sani in the year 1152 A.H. Azad visited the city of Taif and paid homage to the tomb of Abdullah Bin Abbas and left for Jeddah. During the stay at Mecca he composed a poem in praise of the prophet and produced the same in one of the seatings of Ulemas of Mecca. Bilgirami was much appreciated by Arab poets for the said poem and he was rewarded with the title “Hassan-ul-Hind” by the Arab scholars of Mecca. (44 B). On his return journey on 1152 A.H./1739 A.D. (45). After the journey of eight days, he reached Mecca and paid homage to the mausoleum of Hazrat Syyedna Ali Bin Omar Shazli and stayed there for four days. Again he started his journey and reached to the coast of Surat. After staying at Surat for 5 months and 9 days (46) he restarted for the Deccan at the invitation of Asif Jah. Azad had a natural inclination for seclusion and studies, finding of valuable library at Aurangabad he broke his journey (47). The chronogram of arrival of Bilgirami at Aurangabad composed by himself is “Safar Bakhair” corresponding to 1152 A.H./ 1739 A.D. and prepared himself to settle down at the mausoleum of Baba Shah Musafir at Panchakki for several years. During the stay at Aurangabad, he visited Gulbarga and Beedar in 1154 A.H. and after few days he came to Aurangabad and stayed in the same mausoleum. In 1158 A.H./1745 A.D. Asif Jah appointed his son Nawab Nizam-ud-Daula Nasir Jang as Governor of the province of Aurangabad. When the later took charge of his office,
he summoned Azad to his court. Azad accepted the invitation and was received with great honour. He was much impressed by the devotion of the Nawab. Thus a deep and close association was established between the two and continued till the death of the Nawab, on the 17th Muharram, 1164 A.H./1750 A.D. in Karnataka. Azad was much pained on the death of Nawab and thereafter, he returned back to Aurangabad. (48) In his later life Azad kept busy himself in reading and writing of the books.

In the last phase of his life he purchased a piece of land in the vicinity of Khuldabad, near the tomb of Shah Burhan-u-uddin Gharib. According to Abdul Jabbar Khan Malkapur, in 1195 A.H./1780 A.D. he had prepared in grace in his life only and gave the name ‘Aaq-e-bat Khana’. But the writer of Urdu Encyclopaedia mentioned the name as ‘Khabgah-e-raushan’. Dr. Ismat Javid Shaikh seems to have adopted the same name from Urdu encyclopaedia.

‘Aaq-e-bat khana’ is situated in the mausoleum of Amir Hasan Sijzi, and is inside the open tomb of Amir Hasan. Azad celebrated a function on completion of the construction of his grave. He held a function by inviting several nobles, Mashaikh and poets and prepared several dishes for the guests. In the celebration, he asserted that it is a farewell party and he himself was in a very pleasant mood and requested to all to forgive him for any of his mistakes. He also thanked all of them. In the said gathering several poets composed the chronograms for the construction of ‘Aaq-e-bat khana’ and praised Azad Bilgirami very much. (49) After this celebration Bilgirami survived for five years. He died in the year 1200 A.H. (15th Sept. 1786 A.D.) (50)

However, there is a difference of opinion about the exact date of his death as having occurred between 1194 and 1199 A.H. as testified by a number of authentic works such as ‘Nuzhat-ul-quatir’ by Maulana Abdul Hai, ‘Tazkira Shora-e-Deccan by Abdul Jabbar Malkapur, ‘Miqualaat-e-Shibli’ by Maulana Shibli Nomani and urdu encyclopaedia by Nazir Ahmed and therefore we are bound to agree that his year of death is 1200 A.H. the chronogram of his death is;
The writers of Urdu encyclopaedia state that "there is no epitaph existed on the tomb of Bilgirami (52A) But it is not true. Presently it has an epitaph which is as under;

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
حسن البند میر غلام علی آزاد واسمی بلگرامی
ولادت 20 / صفر المظفر
وفات آه غلام علی آزاد
(52-B)

(In the name of Allah, the most beneficent and merciful.)

Birth : 25th Safar 1116 A.H.
Death : Ah! Gulam Ali Azad

21st Zi-Qad, 1200 A.H.)

Azad was ever ready to help those who required his assistance. He was of the opinion that if a man was not in a position to assist his fellow beings monetarily, he should help them with his advice and recommendations. His disciple Lakshminarayan Shafiq was taken of a respectable position on his recommendations. Azad could not remain unmoved by the troubles of others. When a man informed him about the captivity of an aged man, Haji Abdul Shakur, he pleaded his case before Samsam-ud-Daulah and not only got the prisoner released but obtained pension for him for the rest of his life. (53A) Although Bilgirami was appointed as the tutor of Nizam-ud-Daulah Nasir Jung by his father Nizam-ul-Mulk Asif Jah (53B) then after during reign of Nasir Jung he was honoured by the titles of "Raees-ul-Ulema" (53C) and "Siraj-ul-Mohaddisin" (53D) by Nasir Jung. He was also honoured by giving jagirs in the vicinity of Aurangabad at Phulambri and Harsool villages (53E)
Azad’s chief contribution lies in the art of writing biographies in which he excelled not only his contemporaries but many of those who preceded him. While writing the biographies Bilgirami utilised his own style of writing. Azad wrote a number of books, which reflect a wide extent of research. Azad states at several places that he not only made a thorough study of old books but also tried to obtain first hand knowledge from persons who were competent enough to disseminate information in this respect. He utilised several documents and gathered information from all available sources. It is only through his writings that we come to know about several persons who would have otherwise receded into oblivion. One is gratified to find that his biographical sketches are generally free from account of superstitions and miracles as was the case with the biographical works written earlier. Dr. Fazal-ur-Rehman Nadvi has rightly stated that “Azad was a distinguished scholar of his time, a biographer, a linguist and above all probably the most important Arabic poet, ever born in India. He has left an unmistakable impression upon the works of subsequent writers and his services to different branches of learning and literature have been generally acknowledged.” (54)

Likewise the modern renowned Islamic scholar and a great historian Maulana Shibli Nomani asserted the personality of Azad Bilgirami as under;

بندوستان کی سینکڑوار علماء و فضلاء کی حالات پر آچ گمنامی کا پرده پڑا بوا پیر - آزاد سب سے پہلی شخص بین جس نے بندوستان کی علماء اور ارباب عجائب کی حالات قلم بند کی- آزاد نے اس اولیت پر خود جابجا فخر کیا اور بجاکیا- (55)

(His works, in India, was the foremost in its style. Although the Muslims occupy a special privilege in history and biographical literature. But in India, Muslims neglected the same, that since beginning to this period no book was brought (in these branches of knowledge) in India. The events of hundreds of Ulemas are still in oblivion. Azad is the first and the foremost who wrote on the events of Indian Ulemas and intellectuals for the first time.)
In the words of Abdul Jabbar Khan Malkapuri:

"آپ کی عقل و فرآیند و فهم و کیا سمت اس درجه پر تهی که اور سٹر او سے
سبق لیوے اور افلاطون اصلاح. " (56)

(His intellect, brilliance and understanding was so high and of such status that Aristotle would take lesson and Plato (seek) the correction.)

**Works**

As stated above Azad produced a numer of volumes in Arabic and Persian. Though he claims that he was well acquainted with Hindi also but Azad’s contribution to Hindi language is yet doubtful. Though there are references that he had written in Hindi and urdu also, this will be discussed in the later part of this chapter. The works of Azad written in Arabic are as under;

**Arabic Works**

1. Daul-al-Darari (Shra Sahi-ul-Bukhari)
2. Diwans
3. Collection of Masnavis, entitled Mazher-ul-Barkat
4. A poem entitled ‘Miratul Jamat
5. Subhat-ul-Marjan Fi-Aasar-e-Hindustan
6. Erajul Sabha Fi-Madhai Mustafa
7. Kashkaul
8. Shifa-al-Abil Fi-Ishayat-e-Kalam Abi tayyabat-e-Mutnabbi

1. **Daul-al-Darari**

It is an annotated commentary of the famous book on Hadith by Muhammad bin Ismail Al-Jafail bukhari. The work begins from “kaifaba’da-al wahi” and ends with “Kitab-ul-Zakat” (57)

Its style is similar to that of the famous commentry of Sahi-ul-Bukhari known as “Irshadul Sari-li-sharah Sahi-ul-Bukhari” by Ahmad Al-Qastalani (923/1517) (58) The work is an important and it seems that the author took it up during the beginning of his literary career. It
appears that he wanted to write a full commentary on Sahi-ul-Bukhari but for some reasons, he gave up the idea of completing it. (Azad mentions this work only in Subhat-ul-Marjan on Page No. 122 and nowhere else) (59) Before embarking upon his project, he had already received instructions in Hadith specially in Sahi-ul-Bukhari from Muhammad Hayat-Al-Sindhi Al-Madani (d.1163/1750) (60) and generally from Abdul Wahab Al-Tantanvi (d.1157/1744) (61). In the words of Maulana Fazal Nadvi,

"The only copy of the work perhaps is found at Nadwa, Lucknow (62). Wajahat Hussain has mentioned the names of Books without any reference to its availability. Only Shibli Nomani claims to have seen a copy of it. The book from all appearances, is a draft written by the author himself in his own handwriting. The manuscript is written on hand made paper in ‘shikista’ handwriting corrections and deletion are frequent and the lines overlap each other. The last page of the manuscript is in very bad state and moth eaten. At the very end an effort has been made to copy the book neatly and fairly but only a few points have been rendered this. At various places, pages have been left blank. The handwriting is only legible not fair. This has been written in during his stay at Mecca and Madina" (63)

2. Diwans

The total number of Diwans is ten. Out of which seven have been combined in one under the title ‘Al-Saba-al-Sayyara’ except the first two Diwans, the poems in all the other Diwans are updated. Alsbha-Al-Sayyra, as it appears from the last poem of the 7th Diwan and the note given at the end of it, was comleted in 1194/1779-80). The eighth Diwan likewise seems to have been completed in 1198. The eighth Diwan likewise seems to have been completed in 1198/1783, while the ninth and the tenth diwans were completed in the subsquent year. A few of these diwans have been published at Arra (Bihar) Lucknow and at Hyderabad. (64). The above passage is given by Maulana Fazal-ur-Rahman Nadvi he wrote the name of the city where he (Bilgirami) wrote the last Diwans at Lucknow and Hyderabad. But it seems incorrect because the corresponsdng dates locate the presence of the author at Aurangabad.
3. Mazhar-ul-Barkat

It is a collection of Masnavis in Khafif meter and contains 7 sections. Every section is interspersed by tales concerning different topics some of which are of humorous and satirical character. The Masnavis are mainly ethical and suffistic. The first 2 sections were written in 1194 A.H./1780 A.D. and the subsequent two in 1195 A.H./1781 A.D. and the last three in 1196 A.H./1782 A.D. The seven sections contains approximately 3700 couplets.

As a whole the pattern of Masnavies is similar to the great work of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (d.672 A.H./1273 A.D).(65)

4. Mir-at-ul-Jamal

It is an Arabic qasida describing the beauty of the different portions of the beloved’s body. It contains 50 subjects, each subject being expressed in two couplets. The name of different ornaments dresses etc. are also mentioned. In the end there are five chronogram couplets giving 1187 A.H./1773 A.D. as the date of the composition of the poem. (66)

5. Subhat-ul-Marjan Fi-Aaasar-e-Hindustan

This thesis has a separate chapter on the book and hence we need not to discuss here.

6. Erajal Saba Fi-Mudhal Mustafa

It is an anthology of qasida composed in the praise of the prophet. The work has been mentioned only by the author. None of the catalogists have mentioned it nor have I been able to trace it any of the libraries consulted by me. (67)

7. Kashkauil

It has been placed in "Fehriste Mash-ru-he Bade qutub-e-Nafisa qalma". The Kashkaul is mostly written in the handwriting of the
author. There are different subject selected by the author from many books. It has also some note, diaries about some of the important events. (68) The book is in manuscript form in the handwriting of Azad himself is available in kutub khan-e-Asifya (69)

8. Shifa-ul-Alil

The full name of the book is shifa-ul-Alil Fi-Islahat-e-kalam Abi Tayyab Al-Mutanabbi. It describes the peculiarities discovered in the poetry of Al-Mutanabbi together with his metaphors, ingenious similies (70)

Persian works

The Persian works of Azad are as under:
1. Anis-ul-Mohqaqin
2. Bayaz-e-Asha’ar-e-Azad
3. Diwan-e-Azad
4. Ghazalan-e-Hind
5. Khazana-e-Aaamera
6. Ma’asir-ul-Kiram
7. Masnavi-Tatimmai Amwaj-e-Khayal
8. Masnavi Sara- Paya-e-Mashuq
9. Qasida-e-Azad
10. Rauzat-ul-Auliya
11. Sanad-ul-Saadat Fi Husnatu Khatimatul sadat
12. Sar-ve-Azad
13. Shajraye Tayeena
15. Yad-e-bayza

1. Anis-ul-mohqaqin (Dar-Ahwal Mir-Muhammad-Shah Luddha)

This treatises is spreadover 87 Pages having generally 19 lines in each page. The work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the life of Mir Muhammad of Kalpi. The second deals with Mir Ahmed, the third deals with Mir Lut-Fullah Bilgirami known as Shah Luddha who took the Salasil-e-Khamsa (Chistiya, Qaderya,
Naqsh Bandiya, Sahar varadiya and Madariya orders) from Mir Ahmed. The fourth chapter contains letters and discourses of Mir Lutfullah Bilgirami (71).

Bilgirami benefitted by the Bayaz-e-Mir Nawazish Ali made use of the same as source material for the book (72).

2. Bayaz-e-Asha’ar-e-Azad

An anthology of persian poetry which begins with the couplet of Faizi and ends on Jalal Aseer.

3. Diwan-e-Azad

A selection made by Azad himself from his complete diwan in 1187 A.H./1773 A.D. It is alphabetically arranged and consists of all varieties of poetry. (see Nadva. Najma-ul-Hasan col. No.2 storypers, lit. Volume No.I Part II Art 1162, Wajahat Hussain JRASB Vol.II)

4. Gizalan-ul-Hind

The persian version of the last two chapters of Subhat-ul-Marjan compiled on the request of Abdul Quadir Meharban of Aurangabad and Lachminarayan Shafiq, student of Azad begin in 1178/1764 (M S S Nadva Siddiq Hasan coll.No.2091 Rampur Raza Library No.2674.

5. Khazana-e-Aamera

The book in detail had been discussed separately in this thesis.

6. Ma’asir-ul-Kiram

The book also had been discussed in deatil separately in this thesis. Therefore, we need not to discuss here.

7. Masnavi Tatimma-e-Awwaj-ul-khayal

Claimed to be a compliment to the Masnavi Amwaj-ul-khayal by Mir Abdul Jaleel Bilgirami which bears the chronogram giving

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1138/1725 as the date of completion (MSS Nadva Najm-ul-Hasan coll.No.2 Asifya 3/632 No.252 Aligarh Ahsan Col.No.891: 5513 ) (74)

8. Masnavi-e-Sara Pa-e-Mashuq

A detail description of the beloved different from that of Mirat-ul-Jamal in Arabic. It also discussed the controversial problem of Wahedat-ul-Wajud. (75)

9. Qasid-e-Azad

Written on the death of Mir Abdul Jaleel Bilgirami (MS Aligarh, Ahsan col.No.891:5512/2) (76)

10. Rauzat-ul-Auliya

We have a separate chapter on the book ‘Rauzat-ul-Auliya’ and hence we need not to discuss here.

11. Sanad-ul-Sadat Fi-Husn-e-Khatimat-ul-Sadat

The author quotes the Hadith and the sayings of eminent scholar to prove that the last days of the decendent of the prophet would end in happiness and that there enterance to paradise is sure. (77)

12. Sarv-e-Azad

This chapter also included separately in this thesis.

13. Shajr-e-Tayyeba

A small treatises on the pedigrees and lives of Sadat and Shuyuqh of Bilgirami. (78)

A glossary and annotation on a satirical poem of the great poet of Alamgir’s period. It has been reproduced in Khazana-e-Aamra. P 336 (79)

15. Yad-e-Bayza

This book is among the earlier works of Azad and contains 532 biographies of ancient and modern poets (upto the time of Azad.) It was originally compiled at sevistan Sindh during 1143-44 A.H. when the author was working in the capacity of Mir Bakshi and Waqhai Nigar. In later days of his literary life he produced two different editions of the book with some additions. (80)

Urdu Works

It is yet not known whether Azad Bilgirami had composed Urdu or Hindi couplets. But it is true that he was well acquainted with both the languages. However Prof. Nisar Ahmed Farooqui has mentioned two couplets, which are attributed with Azad Bilgirami, from his diary. According to him the said diary was with him during his journey of holy pilgrimage. Thus Prof. Farooqui states;

(What can I utter, the heart is annoyed due to the carelessness of (beloved) the unfaithful, who is called ‘Janaa’ (beloved) did not come one day.

And

( We have addressed to you, why you feel bad my master.)
Bilgirami as an editor of Ma’asir-ul-Umra

It would be unjust on the part of Bilgirami if we shall not remember him as the editor of Ma’asir-ul-Umra. It is understood that the original work of the book was undertaken by his friend Samsam-ud-Daulah, Shah Nawaz Khan, while his stay at Khutubpura Aurangabad when he was under the wrath of Nizam-ul-Mulk. But it is historical sensitivity and sensibility of our author that, keeping in view, its importance: he gathered the scattered pages of Ma’asir-ul-Umra, after the assassination of Samsam-ud-Daulah, Shah Nawaz Khan, when his house was looted and plundered.

Further it is also evident of the sincerity and earnestness of our author that he, very faithfully, put the name of Shah Nawaz Khan as its author, because Bilgirami was the only person who was knowing the fact. If Bilgirami would have decided to declare himself as its author, no one could do any harm to him. But it is the greatness of Azad Bilgirami that he not only, kept the name of Shah Nawaz Khan as the author of the book but also made the necessary corrections, which provided much weightage to the book. Shah Nawaz Khan ignored the mention of some of the important personalities such as Nizam-ul-Mulk Asif Jah-I, martyr Nasir Jung, Amir-ul-Umra Hussain Ali Khan and Qutub-ul-Mulk Abdullah Khan.

It was the sensibility of Azad Bilgirami, who sensed deeply that without mention of these personalities, the book can not be treated as complete. So he inserted the biographies of these nobles. The details regarding the book that in what circumstances the book was written by Shah Nawaz Khan and how Bilgirami took efforts to collect the scattered pages of the book and how and why he edited the book is discussed, in detail, in the chapter Khazana-e-Aamera of this thesis.
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