CHAPTER—I
Persian Language & Literature in the 19th Century Bengal

Since ancient times, Bengal and Iran had trade relations. Iranian traders belonging to different parts of the Middle East came to Bengal and Persian language came with them. Sufis and dervishes from Iran and Middle East also came to Bengal and started preaching Islam in this territory. Since Persian was their language, so naturally native people got acquainted with this language after embracing Islam and reading several books compiled by the sufi saints as well as interacting with people who migrated from Iran. Persian language had reached at every nook and corner of Bengal because of the presence of the Sufis and traders and rulers in Bengal. They left a deep impression on the religious, cultural and social life of Bengal and created a congenial atmosphere of Persian language in the region. Since Indo-Persian literature was attached to Aryan language, so educated Hindus were initiated to read and learn this language and they soon got positions in the Persianate society of Bengal.

During the long span of more than six hundred years from 1203-1837 A.D., Persian enjoyed the status of court and state language in Bengal. Sultans, Nawabs and jagirdars patronized this language and bestowed titles and jagirs on Persian writers, poets and intellectuals generously and Bengal thus became the centre of activities of Sufis and saints, writers and poets of Indo Persian literature.

In the 18th and 19th century, Murshidabad and Calcutta were the two important cities in Bengal which witnessed the development of Persian language and literature. A number of poets and writers from all over India and Iran started coming to Murshidabad since the time of Murshid Quli Khan. In the 18th century Persian language and literature developed considerably. A history of Bengal named Tarikh-e-Nusratjungi was written by the Nawab Nazim of Dhaka, Nawab
Nusratjung (1796-1823 A.D.). In the 19th century a religious learned man from Iran Agha Ahmad bin Mohammad Ali Bahbahani (b.1191 A.H./1717 A.D.) came to India and for five years from 1805-1810 A.D. went on tour of different places of the country. The main purpose of his travelling was preaching of Islam. He reached Calcutta on 15th Rabiutthani 1261 A.H. /1806 A.D. He arrived at Calcutta twenty two years before the arrival of Mirza Ghalib. At that time Calcutta was the most popular port of India. He mentioned the political and social life of the city in his writing. From here he went to Murshidabad and wrote his book *Quwat-e-la-yamut* on religious practices in the year 1807. During his stay in India he apart from writing different religious books, wrote *Mira’at-ul-Ahwal-e-Jahannuma*. In this book the author has described the social and political history of India and mentioned about those cities where he stayed during his visit to India. The account furnished by the author is authentic as it was based on his own observation. The political and social tendency of the people, the dexterousness of the British, the treachery of the Indians towards his own countrymen, the helplessness of the nawabs of Murshidabad and Lucknow, dearth of knowledge and excellence and violation of laws are the matters discussed in this book which helps us to understand the literature of that period.

In 1757 Sirajuddaula was defeated at the Battle of Plassey by the British East India Company. Persian however continued to enjoy its previous position. The British Government was obliged to continue Persian as an official language till 19th century after the establishment of its dominance in the region.

Persian literature also made good progress in Calcutta in 19th century. It was mainly due to the considerable number of poets who settled in this city. Among them the most prominent were Obaidi Suhrawardi (1834-1885) of Midnapur, Abdul Rauf Wahid (1828-1891) of Calcutta, Munshi Mohammad Khadim of Burdawan, and Hazrat Sufi Sayyid Fath Ali Waysi (1825-1886 A.D.) of Chittagong.
The Battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) turned the East India Company into a supreme and sovereign body to rule over India through its British officials. As the British officials were not conversant with Persian and Indian languages, they faced difficulties in running the governmental affairs. Some officers of the East India Company wished to learn Persian and Indian languages in order to find a better career in the newly conquered British colony. William Jones, a puisne judge in the Sadar Diwani Adalat founded the Asiatic Society in 1784 A.D. The establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal augured well for the promotion and development of Persian researches in the Indian subcontinent from 19th century onwards. The Society undertook researches and publication works of Persian studies on the one hand and collection of rare and valuable Persian manuscripts on the other. It received manuscripts from the Seringapatam Committee which originally belonged to the library of Tipu Sultan. There are 3714 Persian manuscripts in the collection of the Asiatic Society Some of which were donated by the Fort William College after its liquidation. Europeans scholars such as Colonel J. Baillie, Claud Martin and many others also donated a large number of Persian manuscripts to the Fort William College which were finally donated to the Asiatic Society in the 19th century. The Asiatic Society published a series of books of Persian researches in which the texts were scientifically edited, annotated and contained scholarly introduction and also presented the translated version of the texts into English and thus helped to sustain Persian studies in Bengal.

Warren Hasting the then Governor General of India, learnt Persian language and other important officers of the East India Company like Kirk Patrick, Gladwin, Glistan, Dr. Harris and William Shur etc., learned Persian language and other local languages like Urdu and Bengali.

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1 A Guide to Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu Manuscripts Libraries in India; Omar Khalidi; P. 56
2 Better than 1001 Nights, Down Town; The Statesman; Syed Akhtar Husain; Friday 26th March, 1999;
With the intention of providing local and official languages of India to all the employees of the East India Company, Lord Wellesley the then Governor General of India, in association with John Borthwick Gilchrist, a great orientalist and linguist of Persian and other local languages, founded Oriental Seminary in Calcutta. Gilchrist himself used to teach Persian language in the same institution. It resulted in big success. Being satisfied, Lord Wellesley presented this matter to the Council. So the Council enforced an order on 3rd January, 1799 for all the employees of East India Company that “From and after the 1st January 1801, no servant will be deemed eligible to any of the offices hereinafter mentioned, unless he shall have passed an examination (the nature of which will be determined), in the law and regulations and in the languages, a knowledge of which is hereby declared to be an indispensable qualification.” So for this purpose the College of Fort William was founded on 18th August 1800. But 4th May 1800 was decided to be recognized its day of inception as it being the first anniversary of the British arms at Seringapatam.

Various subjects taught in this College were Indian and European languages, law, business and economy, history and science etc. But the department of Persian was the most prominent among them. The European Professors who used to teach in this College were Neil. B. Edmonstone, William Kirkpatrick, Francis Gladwin and two Assistant Professors Mathew Lumsden and Charles Stewart etc.

According to the Records a number of Indian Munshis were also appointed in the College for teaching Persian. Namely Moulvi Allah Dad (Head Munshi), Haroon Hoshiar (Second Munshi) and about twenty three Sub-ordinate Munshis. The number of Munshis in the Department of Persian was high in

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4 The history of the College of Fort William from its first foundation, “Bengal: Past and Present, Vol.-7 Cal.,Jan-June,1921,P-5, G.S.A Ranking.
5 British Orientalism and Bengal Renaissance, David Kopf; Firma; K. L. Mukhopadhayay, Calcutta, 1969, p.85
comparison with other departments of the Fort William College.\textsuperscript{6} Similarly, the number of students in the Department of Persian was also much higher. Some of the European students of the same Department were R. Brown, G. P. Haughton, H.T. Princep, H. Shakespeare, A. Starling, J.C.C.C. Sutherland and G. Swington, etc.\textsuperscript{7}

It is a fact that the students, army officers and the employees of the East India Company were eager to learn Persian literature because it was the official as well as the court language of the country and since the British achieved the political power of India after the battles of Plassey and Buxar, so in order to accomplish the military affairs, dissemination of commerce, monetary affairs and for governing the country it had become indispensable for them to be acquainted with Persian language and literature. But most of the European students and teachers like Lumsden, Edmonston, Atkinson and Leyden were really interested in learning this rich literature especially poetry. They contributed much to spread Persian literature in Europe. Before them William Jones and Edward Fitzgerald were deeply involved in Persian poetry. In the Department of Persian of the Fort William College the activities of teaching, translation, writing and publication of both prose and poetry of Persian literature were in full swing. For instance the \textit{Gulistan} and \textit{Bustan} of Saadi, \textit{Sikandar Nama} of Nizami and \textit{Shahnama} of Firdausi were published at that time.\textsuperscript{8}

Fort William College had a noted role in publishing and translating Persian books into other languages. About 132 books were published from Fort William College during the period of 1800 to 1813 A.D. The College helped in editing manuscripts, translating books in Indian languages and publishing grammar and dictionaries of Persian, Sanskrit and Arabic. The European


\textsuperscript{7} \textit{British Orientalism and Bengal Renaissance}, David Kopf, Firma, K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1969, pp. 98-99

Professors wrote books on history and law in English for the students of the Fort William College.\(^9\)

The books written and translated by the Professors and *Munshis* of the Fort William College are listed below:

**Translation of *Pand Nama-e-Saadi***: Gilchrist translated this book in the year 1802 A.D. in English and other Indian languages with the name of Hindee Moral Precepter or Hindi Teacher. In fact Gilchrist has done translation of *Pand Nama-e-Saadi* with the help of the *Munshis* of the College of Fort William.\(^10\) Before Gilchrist, Francis Gladwin had also translated the *Pand Nama-e-Saadi* but both the works did not have similarity.\(^11\) Gilchrist took the help of Munshi Mazhar Ali Khan Wala for translating the verses of *Pand Nama-e-Saadi*.\(^12\)

**Beyaaz-e-Hindi (Casket of India)**: It is the selection of books of *Munshis* of Fort William College. Gilchrist has compiled and published it in Persian, Roman and English. The *Beyaaz-e-Hindi* contained selections of *Bagh o Bahar*, *Tota Kahani*, *Nasr-e-Binazir*, *Akhlaque-e-Hindi*, *Bagh-e-Urdu*, *Marthia-e-Miskeen*, *Shakuntala Natak* and *Madhav wa Nal*.\(^13\)

**The Strangers East India Guide to Hindustani or the Grand Popular Language of India**: This book was published first in 1802 A.D. from Calcutta and second time in 1808 A.D. from Indian Press and for the third time in 1820 A.D. with the title “The Stranger’s Infallibles East India Guide”. Gilchrist wrote this book as a guide for the European army officers and traders. This book contains ghazals of Hafiz and other Persian poets and short stories in the Roman alphabets with translation.\(^14\)

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\(^10\) *Fort William College*, Samiullah, Nishat offset Press, Faizabad, 1989

\(^11\) Ob.cit.

\(^12\) *Bengal Ka Urdu Adab*, Dr. Javed Nehal, M. E. Printers, Delhi-6, 1984, p. 67


\(^14\) *Bengal Ka Urdu Adab*, Dr. Javed Nehal, M. E. Printers, Delhi-6, 1984, pp. 68-70
**Naqliyat-e-Hindi:** This book was published in 1802 A.D. in Persian, Hindi and Roman language from the Indian Press. It contained short stories with translation. Tarini Charan Mitra translated this book into Urdu at the request of Gilchrist. The preface of this book was written by Gilchrist.\(^{15}\)

**Mashriqui Dastaangu:** It was published in 1803 A.D. In this book Gilchrist translated the fables of Hakim Luqman (Eastern fabulist and sage identified with Aesop). It also has other short stories of Persian, Brij Bhasha and Sanskrit. This book was completed with the help of the munshis of the Fort William College (Tarini Charan Mitra, Wala, Husaini and Lallu Lal Kaukab).\(^{16}\)

**Munshi Farsi (Persian Munshi):** It was first published in 1795 A.D. from the Chronicle Press and in the year 1800 it was published for the third time for the students of the Fort William College. This book is divided into four chapters containing Persian grammar and vocabulary.\(^{17}\)

**Rahnuma-e-Farsi (Persian Guide):** The source of Rahnuma-e-Farsi is Arabic. It was published in the year 1800 A.D. from Calcutta. Gladwin compiled this book containing 419 pages for the students of the Fort William College. An advertisement was given on 29\(^{th}\) January, 1801 at the first page of the daily newspaper ‘Calcutta Gazette’ regarding this book. Moulvi Amir Haider contributed a lot to put Rahnuma-e-Farsi in order.\(^{18}\)

**Lughat Nama-e-Fiqh Qawanin-e-Islami:** In this book the technical terms of revenue and financial matters of Bengal were discussed in Persian and Urdu. Vocabulary and its meaning in Persian and English were given at the end of the book.\(^{19}\) Gladwin edited this book in the year 1796 A.D. and in the year 1798 A.D. it was published from the India Office Press.

\(^{15}\) Ibid. p. 70  
\(^{16}\) Ibid. p. 70  
\(^{17}\) “Calcutta Pioneers Persian Studies : Francis Gladwin Contributions,” Indo Iranica, Dr. P. T. Nair, pp. 160-161  
\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 162  
\(^{19}\) Fort William College, Samiullah, Nishat Office Press, Faizabad, 1989, p. 113.
Lughat Nama-e-Farsi, English and Hindustani: This dictionary was written by Gilchrist in the year 1801 A.D. but it was not published. Manuscript of this dictionary is available at the Asiatic Society.20

Dastanha-i-Dilchasp (Entertaining Stories): It is the book of anecdotes written in Persian with English translation. Gladwin had written this book for the students of the Fort William College and for the traders. After Gladwin translation of this book was done in Bengali and later on in other Indian languages and published in old Hindi script.21

Gulistan-e-Saadi: It was translated into English by Gladwin and published in 1806 A.D. from the Hindustani Press. After that it was published in the years 1809, 1834, 1845, 1907 and 1928 from different press.22 Gladwin dedicated Gulistan-e-Saadi to Lord Wellesly.

Tuti Nameh (The Tutinameh or tales of a Parrot): This book of fables in Persian of Hazrat Nakshbi was translated into English and published by Gladwin in 1792. It was published for the second time in 1801 from London and in 1832 K. Laxman Mudliyar published it from Calcutta for the third time.23

Tarikh-e-Aasham: Ahmad Shaha-bud-din Talish wrote Tarikh-e-Aasham in Persian.24 It was translated into Urdu by Mir Bahader Ali Husaini in 1805.25 In this book the author has discussed about the pain and sufferings during the battles of Assam and Kooch Bihar. Tarikh-e-Aasham is a historical document containing four discourses. The first chapter discusses about the attack of Mir Jafar (general of Aurangzeb) on Assam and Kooch Bihar. The book ends with the death of Umad-ul-Mulk.

Akhlague-e-Hindi: It is the Persian translation of the book “Mifrah-ul-Qulub” which is translated from Hotepdeash (Sanskrit Language) by Tajuddin.

21 Ibid., p.71
24 Assam is written as Aasham everywhere in the manuscript of Tarikh-e-Aasham. It might be called so at that time.
25 Fort William College aur Husn-e-Ikhtelatat, (Urdu), Dr Shahnaz Nabi, High Quality and X Ofset Printers, Calcutta, 2003, p. 40
In the year 1802 Mir Bahader Ali Husaini translated Mifrah-ul-Qulub into Urdu at the request of Gilchrist. *Akhlaque-e-Hindi* was first published in the year 1802 in old Hindi script (Devnagiri) and then in 1803 it was published for the second time in Persian. This book consists of four chapters. The first chapter contains description about friendship, the second chapter describes separation of friends, the third chapter consists of battles and at last the feelings after war are discussed.26

*Tarikh-e-Nadiri*: It is written in Persian by Mohammad Mehdi. It consists of 780 pages. The reign of Nadir Shah Durrani and the political and social conditions of Iran are described in this book. As a historical point of view *Tarikh-e-Nadiri* has great importance. In the year 1809 it was translated into Urdu by Haider Baksh Haideri at the request of William Hunter and William Taylor but could not be published. Its manuscript is present at the Asiatic Society.27

*Haft Paikar*: It is written in Persian by Nizami Ganjavi. In *Haft Paikar* seven interesting anecdotes are written intermingled with each other. It consists of 153 pages. In the year 1805 it was translated into Urdu by *Haider* at the request of the officials of the Fort William College. The manuscript of *Haft Paikar* is at the Asiatic Society.28

*Qissa-e-Laila Majnu*: In 1801 A.D. Mathnavi ‘Laila Majnu’ of Amir Khosrow which was in Persian got translated into Urdu by *Haideri* at the instance of John Gilchrist but it was not published. Manuscript of *Qissa-e-Laila Majnu* is not available at present.29


26 Bengal ka Urdu Adab, Dr. Javed Nehal, M.E. Printers, Delhi-6, 1984, pp-73, 74.
28 Bengal ka Urdu Adab, Dr, Javed Nehal, M.E. Printers, Delhi-6, 1984,
29 Fort William College, Samiullah, Nishat Press, Faizabad, 1989, p-144
at the instance of Governor General Lord Minto. This book has great importance from the historical point of view.

So in every respect the Department of Persian of the Fort William College has played a great role in promoting Persian language and literature in 19th century Bengal.

The invention of printing press in the early modern period of human civilization paved the way for the rise and development of newspapers and journalism in the world. The history of Persian journalism began with the printing of Persian newspapers in city of Calcutta in the early 19th century, signaling a new phenomenon in the cultural history of India. A number of Persian newspapers, generally being weeklies, were published from time to time during the period.

Raja Ram Roy, the first modern man of India, was also a great scholar of Persian. He discovered the common elements of Islam and other religions of the world and fused them together in his celebrated work *Tuhfatul Muwahedin* in Arabicised Persian. He was also the editor of the first newspaper in Persian called the *Miratul Akhbar* (1822 – 1823). It was printed from a locality of Calcutta. This newspaper was short lived but its contemporary newspaper *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* (1822 - 1945) continued for a pretty long period. The printing press of this newspaper was situated at Tara Chand Dutt Street in Colootola, Calcutta. It was a bilingual newspaper published in Persian and Urdu since 1822 A.D. The newspaper carried the obituary of Raja Ram Mohan Roy who died in Bristol in 1833 in its issue dated 12th March 1834, which read as:

“Rammohan Roy is the Lamp of Bengal
He was like a rose in the Garden of Bengal

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30 Bengal ka Urdu Adab, Dr.Javed Nehal, M.E. Printers Delhi-6,1984, pp-159,160
31 Fort William College: A Premier Centre of Persian Language and Literature studies; Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the degree Master of Philosophy by Md. Jafar under the supervision of Dr. Syed Akhtar Husain,
When Bengal became its land of birth  
Its head touched the height of the skies  
Ambassador he was in London from the Indian king  
His demise intensified the grief of Bengal  
He wanted reformation for India  
And desired prosperity for Bengal  
But the cupbearer of Time made  
The Crows of Bengal shed  
Tears of blood on Rammohan’s death  
And the crow and peacock of Bengal  
Cried for a chronogram in the Christian calendar  
Oh the inhabitants of India I write (the chronogram)  
As under: “Alas! The Lamp of Bengal is extinguished.”

A few of the other newspapers that were published during that period were  

Besides the above mentioned newspapers, *Aineh i Sikander* (1831 – 1840) was by far the most celebrated Persian newspaper circulated from Calcutta all over India. It was printed from Collin Street Calcutta in the first half of the 19th century. Its editor was Moulvi Sirajuddin who had long association with the noted poet and writer of Urdu and Indo-Persian literature Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib of Delhi.

While describing about poets and writers of 19th century Bengal the name of Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib must not be forgotten. Though he was born and

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brought up in Agra from 1797-1812 A.D. and settled down in Delhi from 1812 A.D. till his demise, yet he passed some memorable years of his life in Calcutta which gives him privilege to enlist his name in the lists of famous poets and writers of Bengal. The poetry of Mirza Ghalib in both Urdu and Indo-Persian literature is of equal importance and has earned him fame among Indians. Ghalib was an intelligent writer so whatever verses he said in amusement or in grave mood became immortal but apart from this poetry, a good number of his prose works in Indo-Persian are immersed in pain and sufferings. This portion of poetry shows the distress and struggle of his life. Ghalib was also a talented letter writer of Urdu and Persian literature. His *Panj Ahang* is a book containing approximately more than 126 letters writing in Persian sent by him to about 50 correspondents living in various parts of the sub-continent. The letters of the *Panj Ahang* were written under different circumstances to his friends and relatives. These letters throws light on various aspects of his life. They also enlighten us about the socio cultural conditions of his time. His first poem *Baad-e Mukhalif* written in a masnavi form was versified in his early days when he had visited Calcutta. It was written when he has to live in Calcutta for two years to recover his pensions\(^3\).

A brief discussion about the family background of Mirza Ghalib and the circumstances under which the pension problem arose would not be out of place here.

The ancestors of Ghalib belonged to the Turkish clan of Samarqand. His grandfather, Quqan Khan migrated to India from Samarqand during the reign of Shah Alam II. His sons Nasrulla Beg and Abdullah Beg were in the service of the Marathas. Abdullah Beg died in 1802 A.D. leaving behind two sons Mirza Ghalib, Mirza Yusuf and a daughter to his brother. Nasrullah Beg who was then in charge of Agra Fort took the family of his deceased brother under his care and protection. The beginning of the 19\(^{th}\) century witnessed the

\(^3\) Ghalib ki Farsi Shairi; Prof. Waris Kirmani, Ghalib Institute, New Delhi; pp. 49, 50
rise of the British power in India. In 1803 A.D., Lord Lake had planned to lay siege to the Agra Fort. Nasrullan Beg’s brother-in-law Ahmad Baksh Khan, a supplier of horses to the British insisted him to surrender the Fort to Lord Lake without any resistance. In reward he was given a big *jagir* and a good monthly salary. Narullah Beg died in 1806. The revenue of the parganas merged with the estates of Firozpur Jhirka which belonged to Ahmad Baksh Khan. The dependent of Nasrullah Beg were entitled to a monthly pension. The pension was disbursed from the exchequer of Ahmad Baksh Khan from where Ghalib used to get Rs.62 and eight Annas only per month as his share. This arrangement was made by Ahmad Baksh Khan as a result of his petition to Lord Lake in June 1806, which made his order of May 1806 invalid. So this created the pension case and this problem is seen in his poetic and prose works.

In 1828 A.D., when Ghalib was in Calcutta, a *mushaira* (poetic symposium) was organized in his honour at the famous Madrasa Alia. There he was criticized over the use of Persian idioms in his poetry. The poets of Calcutta used the authority of Muhammad Hasan Qateel to criticize Ghalib. A dispute arose between Ghalib and his critics. This resulted in his composition of the famous masnavi “*Baad-e-Mukhalif*”. By this masnavi, Ghalib was able to pacify his literary opponents. Generally this masnavi was regarded as an apology but a sense of irony was also felt throughout the poem. In this masnavi, *Ghalib* refuted the authority of *Qateel* for not being a Persian poet as *Ghalib* considered himself supporter and follower of Iranian poets like *Urfī, Naziri, Zahuri, Aseer, Talib Amuli* and *Hazin*.

In the year 1780, during the time of Governor General Warren Hasting, a group of Muslim leaders requested him to set up a madrasa of Arabic and Persian. So in 1781 A.D. a building was erected for the same purpose at *Bahu Bazar* Street where Arabic and Persian were taught. The officers of the British

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36 *Ghalib ki Farsi shairi*, Prof. Waris Kirmani, Ghalib Institute, New Delhi-2, 2001
army having knowledge of oriental language were appointed the principal of the Madrasa for its management. In 1827 A.D. the building of the madrasa was built at Wellesley Square, Kolkata. This madrasa played a pivotal role in spreading Anglo-Persian literature in 19th century Bengal.37

Bengal and Bihar was a joint state from 1733 to 1912 A.D. Initially Murshidabad was the capital of Bengal and Bihar and later Calcutta became the capital of Bengal and Bihar from 1772 to 1912 A.D. Due to which the intellectuals of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were shuttling between the two capitals during the period. Poets and literary personalities used to meet each other and exchange views. During this period the following writers of Persian literature emerged in the literary atmosphere of undivided Bengal.

**Abdul Rauf Wahid:**

He was born in an affluent family in Kolkata in 1246 A.H./1828 A.D. and died in 1311 A.H. /1893 A.D. His father Shaikh Ahmed Ali Siddiqui Hanafi Naqshbandi (died 1289 A.H. /1873 A.D.) was a great devotee of God and a very wise man. He did not care for worldly pleasures.

Moulana Wahid received his primary education from his father. Afterwards he received higher education from other teachers and then he was admitted to Calcutta Madrasa and got his religious and secular education from the headmaster of his Madrasa. From his childhood he was very fond of literature. When he was in service he wrote innumerable poetries in Persian and Urdu and wrote many books on history, grammar and other subjects. He mainly wrote Persian poetries. “Diwan-e-Wahid” is his collection of poetries in Persian. He was one the greatest poets of that time. His greatest inspiration was his teacher and guide Syed Shah Ulfat Husain Faryaad Azimabadi (1804-1845 A.D.), who was one of the greatest personalities, renowned journalist and historian of that period. Wahid was also very much engaged in journalism and cultural history. In

1835 A.D., Ulfat Husain started a newspaper in Calcutta “Sutanuti Akhbar” whose publication was shelved due to many problems. The paper was again started re-printing by the efforts of Maulana Wahid and continued till 1857 A.D. His famous works were published in the two Calcutta's Persian weeklies “Durbin” and “Urdu-Guide”. For many years he was the editor of these two papers and improved the standard of writings. These two papers had a great role for the welfare of the country and nation. At that time these two newspapers were ideal in the field of journalism.

In 1270 A.H. /1855 A.D., Wahid was appointed as the translator in the district court of Kolkata and continued his service for some time. In the meantime, the Persian teacher of Kolkata Madrasa, Mirza Buzurg Shirazi died and Wahid was appointed in the same post on 2nd Rajab 1276 A.H. He was in that post for nearly 2 years and brought back interest in Persian education among his students. The British Government appointed him as the chief translator (mir munshi) of Government's managing committee in 1862 A.D. In the beginning of 1889 A.D., he was honoured with the fellowship of Calcutta University. At that time he also worked as a member of Arabic, Persian and Urdu Board of Calcutta University.

Wahid with the co-operation of some renowned Muslim leaders founded “Anjuman-e-Islami”; the first national political institution of Indian Muslims with a view to build a powerful political and social platform for the welfare of the poor Muslims. It started to work on 6th May, 1855 in Calcutta.

Moulana Wahid had written a number of books which are as follows:-

1. **Tahreerat-e-Wahidi:** This book contains the speeches delivered by Moulana Wahidi at the various meetings of Mohammadan Literary Society established by Nawab Abdul Latif.

2. **Tawarikh-e-Bengal:** Maulana Wahid translated this book in Persian language written by Marshman entitled “History of Bengal” and gave
the name of the book “Tawarikh-e-Bengal” in 1853 A.D. This book containing 691 pages was published from the Sutanukul Akhbar Press of Kolkata. One copy of this book is kept at the Dhaka University.

3. **Sarf-e-Wahidi:** - In this book etymology of Persian language was described.

4. **Nahab-e-Wahidi:** - In this book description of syntax of Persian language was given. It is written in Persian containing 371 pages. It is published from Mazhar-ul-Ajaib Press of Calcutta in 1279 A.H. / 1862 A.D. One copy of this book is preserved at the Dhaka University.


He has also written a number of other books such as:

i. *Tarikh-e-Calcutta.*

ii. *Shakh-e-Marjan.*

iii. *Tuhfatul Haza.*


vii. *Jawahir-us- Sana.*


His other writings are unavailable. He had a separate image in the traditional literature writing and social life. Nawab Abdul Lalif had admired Wahidi for his contributions for the cause of the Mohammadan Literary Society like this, “A great deal of success was due to the untiring zeal and devotion manifested by Maualvi Mohammad Abdul Rauf Wahid, the late Maualvi Abdul
Hakim and several other gentlemen.” 38

Asman jah Bahadur Anjuman: Asman jah Bahadur Anjuman was the son of Wajid Ali Shah Akhtar, the last Nawab of Awadh. He was born in 1822 A.D. in Lucknow but he came along with his banished father to Calcutta. He was mainly an Urdu poet but composed some Persian poems also. According to Abdul Ghaffur Nassakh he was a very talented man. Nassakh quoted some of his Persian couplets in his book *Tazkirat-ul-Muasereen*. It is supposed that he died at the end of the 19th century.

Qazi Abdul Hamid: His native place was Dhaka but lived in Calcutta. His father’s name was Maulavi Mohammed. His father-in-law was Hafiz Jamaluddin, the khalifa of Syed Ahmed Shaheed of Barelli. Like his father-in-law, he had a great devotion towards God and was a very virtuous man. Hamid was a marriage registrar at Sialdah and at the same time he was a teacher of Persian and Arabic at Deveton College in Calcutta. He was a competent poet and wrote verses in Persian and Urdu. He was influenced by Nassakh and Syed Mohammed Azad in the field of poetry. Nassakh in his book “*Tazkirat-ul-Muasereen*” quoted few of his Persian verses. Qazi Abdul Hamid collected some written works regarding the life of his teacher Nassakh in different language and published under the name of “*Qasayed-a-Muntakhaba*” from Lucknow.

Syed Ashrafuddin Ahmed Nawabzada: Syed Ashrafuddin Ahmed Khan Bahadur was born in Calcutta on 6th January 1855 A.D / 1271 A.H. His father Amiruddin Haider was a celebrated personality. They were the descendents of Hazrat Ali. His ancestor Qazi Syed Nuh Masubi migrated from Baghdad during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan and settled in Delhi. Gradually, he became one of the renowned people of Delhi and the emperor praised him with the title “Shaykhul Mashayekh”.

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Ashrafuddin learned Arabic and Persian languages. For his literary works he did not follow experts’ opinion. By his own efforts, he acquired the art of poetry. He passed entrance from Calcutta Madrasa. After that he was admitted to Deveton College.

After finishing his education, he served under the deposed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah with a salary of Rs. 100 per month (1822-1887 A.D.). After the death of Syed Karamat Ali Jonipuri (1798-1875), Lieutenant Governor of Bengal appointed him as the seventh Mutawalli of Hooghly Imambara with the aim to recover the dilapidated conditions of the Imambara. Besides the responsibility of this post, he also worked at posts also. He was the honorary magistrate and municipal commissioner of Hoogly, a fellow of Calcutta University and trustee of Aligarh College. In 1893 A.D. he was honoured by the title “Khan Bahadur”. He died after 1911 A.D.

Ashrafuddin Ahmad was a very efficient Persian poet & writer. The names of some of his writings are Nawratan, Yaadgaar, Ibratnama, Durdana-e-Khayal, Tabaquat-e-Muhsenia and Auraque-e-Ashraf etc.

“Nawratan” is a collection of biographies and literary contributions of nine Persian poets like Firdausi, Nizami, Sanai, Jalaluddin Rumi, Hafiz, Saadi, Khaqani, Anwari and Qaani. This Persian book consists of 152 pages was published from ‘Jawar-e-Muhammadi” press of Calcutta in 1882 A.D. Ashrafuddin Ahmad described the death of these 9 above mentioned poets in a self written poetry form in an omnibus style, a copy of which has been preserved in Dhaka Aliya Madarsa.

The Persian book Tabaquat-e-Muhsenia was published in 1889 A.D. This book consisting of 64 pages illustrate the life of Haji Mohammed Muhsin (1730-1812 A.D), who was the founder of Hooghly Imambara and Muhsenia Fund. In the initial chapters of this book the writer recounts the life of Haji Mohammed Muhsin but later proceeds to describe the life and literary contributions of other
mutawallis of the Imambara. A copy of which is preserved in the Dhaka University.


**Amir Ali Khan:** He was born in 1810 A.D. in Patna. Along with the Oriental language, he had a good command in Urdu and Persian literature. He was offered an assignment of manager for the estate of Wajid Ali Shah in 1867-75 A.D. He earned the title “Wazir-us-Sultan” from the deposed Nawab. He was awarded the title ‘companionship of Turkish order’ in 1878 A.D. from the Sultan of Turkey for his service to the welfare of mankind. He died in 1879 A.D. He wrote his biography in Persian language. Besides this, he wrote *Wazirnama* in Persian which reflects the family lineage and administrative competence of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. It was published in 1875 A.D. from the Nizami Press of Kanpur.

**Ulfat Husain Farid Azimabadi:** (1804-1881 A.D.) had a lineage from Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani, the famous Qadiria Sufi saint. He was a great poet of Urdu and Persian. His teacher was Shah Waris Ali. He wrote various Diwans, namely *Dabiristan-e-Akhlaque, Rawait-ul-Maani, Masnavi-e-Ganjina and Masnavi-e-Tilism.* Besides these he wrote in various Persian periodicals also.

**Wajid Ali Shah Akhtar:** He was the last emperor of Awadh. He was dethroned on 31st Jan.1856 A.D. After dethronement, he was sent to Calcutta and imprisoned at Fort William. After a short period he was permanently sent to Matiabrugh. He was a great patron of Thumri and Bengali songs. During his time Bengal saw a cultural resurgence. He wrote near about 40 books in Urdu and Persian. He wrote six diwans, masnavi, qasida and marsia.
**Yamuddin Sultan:** He was well versed in Urdu and Persian. He wrote *Sukhan-e-shuara* in the year 1874 A.D. The description of his life sketch is mentioned in *“Tazkirat-ul-Muasereen”*.

**Shahzad Rahimuddin:** He was the grandson of Tipu Sultan and resident of Tollygunge, Calcutta. He was the president of Mohammadan Literary Society. He wrote a number of Persian poems and a special mention should be made for *Haft Bandh* written in 1888 A.D. His poetic activities have been mentioned in *‘Tazkirat-ul-Muasereen’*.

**Syed Mohammad Husain:** His poetic name was Bulbul-e-Kuchak. He was born in Karbala. He came to India in 1854 A.D. and settled in Calcutta. He met Abdul Ghaffur Nassakh in Dhaka and Calcutta. His poetic activities were published in *Tazkirat-ul-Muasereen*. His famous poem *Saba-e-Gulshan* was published in 1877-78 A.D. He died in 1870 A.D.

**Shiv Pradhan Saqib Kanpuri:** He was known as Maharaja Jai Pal Singh Bahadur. He was born in Kanpur. His father was a munshi of Nawab of Awadh. After his father’s demise, he got the same post. He was awarded the title of Maharaja and Bahadur. After the expulsion of Wajid Ali Shah, he also came along with him. He also served for the revenue affairs of the state. He was a Persian poet as well as a writer. His poetic name was Saqib which means “bright”. He wrote *Subh-e-Gulshan* in 1878 A.D. He wrote the history of Awadh and Delhi in Persian prose named *Tarikh-e-Awadh* and *Tarikh-e-Delhi*.

**Mirza Abutalin Khan** (1752-1805 A.D.): Mirza Abutalin Khan’s father Haji Muhammad Beg was an inhabitant of Isfahan. He came to India at a very young age to try his fate. He got a job under the Nawab of Ayodhya - Nawab Abul Mansoor Khan Safdarjung.

Mirza Abu Talib was born there in 1752 A.D. in Lucknow. He completed his education under the patronage of the Nawab. He took a job under Colonel Alexander Henry in Gorakhpur and spent three years there at his service. Due to some political quandary, he was forced to settle down in Calcutta in 1787 A.D.
and resided there till 1792 A.D. During these years, he was engaged in writing books and acquiring knowledge. He published “Diwan-e-Hafiz” in 1791 A.D. His book “Khulasat-ul-Afkar” was published in 1791-92 A.D. He wrote about 500 contemporary poems in this book. These two books well describes his literary intelligence and excellence. He wrote “Tafzihul Ghafelein” giving an account of his experience in 1797 A.D. This book can be observed as the history of Ayodhya.

The next Governor General Sir John Shore (1793-98 A.D.) promised Abu Talib a job but could not fulfil it. At this point of time, Captain Richardson advised him to go to Europe, which he agreed to. He came to Kolkata after travelling extensively in European countries and Middle East. He gave an account of his travels in his book “Muasir-e-Talibi wa bilad-e-afranji” which was published in 1803 A.D. This book is written in simple and lucid Persian language. Charles Stuart translated this in two volumes. He wrote this book with a view to educated Indians regarding the development of Europe and made a comparative study of India and Europe in some aspect. In 1827 A.D., David Macfarin published a precise translation of this book. A copy of this book is kept in Dhaka Aliah Madrasah.


Mirza Abu Talib was a poet, a literary criticizer, historian, a philologist, a peregrinator and a describer of travelogue. He translated the Arabic dictionary “Kamus” in Farsi.

He was honourably felicitated by the intellectual of the world because of his knowledge. He was a patriot too. Although he had no contribution in the

freedom fight of India, but he had considerable contribution in the field of knowledge. He died in 1806 A.D.

**Najaf Ali Khan:** Najaf Ali Khan wrote his poem with the name “Khasta”. His father’s name was Kazi Muhammad Azimuddin Khan. Najaf Ali was the Kazi of Jihjura in Murshidabad. He was a learned and renowned man and a literary professional. He was well-versed in Arabic and Persian. His writings are the best examples of his erudition.

He was the teacher of Maharaja of Alwar and Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad. He was the companion of Muhammad Wahir Khan Bahadur-the ruler of Tank. His books are as follows:-

1. Tafsir-e-Gharib (Persian)
2. Sharh-e-Maqamat-e-Hariri (Arabic)
4. Sharh-e-Tuhfat-ul-Iraqin (Persian)
5. Sharh-e-Dasateer / Safrange Dasateer (Persian)
6. Sharh-e-Dasateer (Old Persian)
7. Tarikh-e-Gadar-e-Hindustan (Dari Farsi)
8. Wazirnama-dedicated to Nawab Muhammad Wazir Khan.
9. Khulasatul Afkar
10. Tazkira-e-Shaqqul Qamar
11. Tarikh-e-Murshidabad (Farsi)
12. Sharh-e-Naldaman-e-Faizi (Farsi)
13. Tarjuma-e-Injeel (translation of the Holy Bible in poetic form)
14. Dar-e-kusha (Farsi)

Besides these, he wrote the critical appreciation of “Rubayat-e-Farsi” and “Shahid-e-Ishrat” written by Abdul Ghaffur Nassakh. In this book “Tazkirat-ul-e-Muasereen”, Nassakh wrote about his meeting with Najaf Ali in Murshidabad, Benaras and Birbhum.
In his autobiography, Abdul Ghaffur Nassakh wrote about Nasaf Ali. His autobiography “Sasanih-e-Umari” tells us that Nasif Ali was a scholar of unparalleled quality in his time in India. He quoted 20 poems of Nasaf Ali in his book “Tazkirat-ul-e-Muasereen”.

**Nawab Hussain Ali Mirza Sulaiman:** Nawab Hussain Ali Mirza Sulaiman wrote his poems with the name Sulaiman. He was the son of Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad. He could write beautiful poems in Urdu and Farsi.


**Syed Karamat Ali Jaunpuri** (1798-1875 A.D.):- Maulavi Syed Karamat Ali Jaunpuri was born in Jaunpur in U.P., India in 1898 A.D. His father died when he was very young. His father’s name was Syed Rahmat Ali Jaunpuri. He was brought up by his elder sister. He was interested in gathering knowledge and keen at travel. He came to Delhi from Jaunpur at the age of eleven. After staying there for some years in Delhi, he went to Punjab and from there travelled to Afghanistan and Iran by foot.

Syed Karamat Ali spent many years in Tabriz. He gathered knowledge by accompanying renowned Alim and Fareb of Iran. Karamat Ali was a renowned Alim, philosopher, historian and scholar of his time. He was well-versed in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. Though he did not know English very well, he had knowledge of the scientific research going on in Europe. He was influenced by the modern mentality and outlook of the Europeans.

The pen name of Karamat was Taufique. His writings are very rare now. His poems were inspiring. It is said that he followed the writings of Hakim Sanai Gajanbir in his work.

In 1863, Nawab Abdul Latif established “Mohamedan Literary Society”. Karamat Ali joined the society and made his decision clear about bifurcating religion from politics. In his service life, he performed various duties with excellence. This proves that he was an intelligent and knowledgeable person. He
stayed in Iran for 21 years. He was involved in gathering knowledge there. As Iran was mainly a Farsi speaking country, his stay in Iran proves that he was well-versed in Farsi language. As he was the mutawali of Hoogly Imambara, it evinces that he was a religious person too.


*Maghaz-e-Ulum* is special contributory book of Karamat Ali. The Urdu book was published in 1865 A.D. Maulana Ubaidullah and Syed Amir Ali translated this book in English. The English translation, “a treatise on the origin of sciences” was published on 1867 A.D. from the Baptist Mission Press. It was highly regarded in other countries. A copy of this book (the English translation) is kept in the Dhaka University. This book proves the progressive predisposition of Karamat Ali. By writing this book, he tried to create a bridge between the Arabic scientific school of thought and that of Europe.

He said that the Europeans have become the most knowledgeable people in the world and so the Muslims should co-operate with them to know the scientific and technological researches done by them.

*Risala-dar-Fazilat-e-Arabiyah* was published on 1269 A.H. / 1853 A.D. from Najamus Saadat Press of Kolkata. In this book Karamat Ali tried to prove the supremacy of Arabic language over all non-Arabic languages. Mainly he made a comparative study of all the main languages of Asia and attempted to prove the superiority of Arabic language over the rest. Whatever be the aim of the writer, this book can be described as a philological book. Though this book has little importance in modern times, but it was an important book in the by-gone age.

We cannot help but admire that the undivided Bengal was blessed and enriched with eminent poets in the 19th Century. Pious, patriotic and talented
poets from all across the country and abroad came to this region and contributed to Persian Literature with their unfathomable sagacity. Their contribution towards the Persian literature evinces their unparallel devotion towards the subject.

These poets and scholars had varied styles of writing and different ambits of works. This century bore witness to a class of literary giants, a few of them being Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib, Obaidi Suhrawardi of Midnapur, Abdul Rauf Wahid of Calcutta, Munshi Mohammad Khadim of Burdawan and Hazrat Sufi Sayyid Fath Ali Waysi of Chittagong.

Such were their genius that scholars from all across the world have explored their work and still are.