

Chapter - 4

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Libraries

of

The Moghuls,

The Minor Muslim Kingdoms,

The Marathas

&

The Contemporary Hindu

Centres of

Learning

The cultural history of the Timurid dynasty is the culmination of the tradition started in Turko-Afghan period. The Moghul emperors were great patrons of learning and great builders. Innumerable Mosques, Mausolems and educational institutions were constructed during this period. Except Aurangzeb all other emperors extended their help graciously to the growth and development of art, literature and music. Book-making as well as library-development made remarkable progress during this period.

Zahir -ud-din Mohammad Bābur was a scholar, man of literary taste and author of several volumes both on Jurisprudence and Prosody.¹ He encouraged calligraphy and himself invented a new type of writing known as Bābari hand.²

Bābur was very fond of books and took keen interest in the development of his library. In 1525 he took possession of the personal library of Ghāzi Khān and expected to find many good books there. But he was disappointed and this is evidently clear from his following saying -

"I did not on the whole find so many books of value as, from their appearance, I had expected." He distributed some of the selected titles to Humāyun and Kāmran.³

Bābur was always accompanied by learned and literary men who received considerable encouragement from the emperor. Among them the name of Khwandamir deserves special mention. Khwandamir who was a librarian in Hirat accompanied the king in his expedition to Bengal.⁴

During his reign innumerable schools and colleges were built up. One of the duties of the Shuhrah-i-Ām or the public works Departments was to build⁵ Maktabas and Madrasahs. Every Madrasah usually had⁶ its own library.

Bābur was also keen in building up the Imperial⁷ library⁸ as well as his own personal library, where he kept selected and well-illustrated books of his choice. Here within his personal library he used to take rest and to relax. The ruler is also credited for having introduced the art of book-illustration which considerably developed during the reign of⁹ his son and grandson.

Humāyūn, the eldest son of Bābur ascended the throne in 1530 A.D.

Humāyūn imbibed some of the best traits and traditions of his family and like his father he was highly educated and was passionately interested in Arts and Sciences. Moreover while he, as an exiled monarch, was living in Persia, he was strongly influenced by the literary and artistic activities

of Shāh Tahmāspas court. He wrote a few volumes on the nature of elements and loved to study Geography and Astronomy.¹⁰ The other favourite subjects of the emperor were literature and poetry and like his predecessors he used to hold discussions with the poets and philosophers.¹¹ Ferishta writes that the emperor built seven halls and named them after seven planets. In the halls named after Saturn and Jupiter he used to receive men of letters like Khwandamir, the historian and ex-librarian of Hirat; Jauhar, the reputed author, Admiral Sidi Ali Rais, the Turkish scholar, poet and astronomer. In his travel diary Admiral Rais wrote - "I started work and finished my astronomical observations, working day and night without taking any rest..." There is much enthusiasm for poetry and poetical contests in those days and for this reason I had to remain in the king's presence."¹²

Humāyūn was a great lover of books and he was encouraged to cultivate the hobby by his father who presented him with selected books from the collection of Gāzi Khān. The emperor's fondness went so far that he used to carry a library of selected works when he was engaged in battle-fields. During the time of his expeditions to Bengal and Guzrat he carried such library.¹³ Even being defeated by Sher Khān when he encamped at Cambay he had several

books and a librarian with him.¹⁴ One night during the fugitive period a body of forest tribes known as Kolis made a night attack on his camp and plundered it and decamped with the booty of which was a copy of the History of Tamerlaine.¹⁵ This is further corroborated by the following writing of Abul-Fazi - " Many rare books which were his real companions and were always kept in His Majesty's personal possession were lost. Among these was Timur-Nāmā, translated by Mullā Sultān Āli and illustrated by Ustād Bihzād which is now in the Shāhenshāh's library.¹⁶ " Nizām, father of Lāla Beg or Bāz Bahādur was a librarian of the king.¹⁷

The emperor's encouragement in establishing libraries is ~~father~~ further emphasised by the fact that he converted a pleasure-house in Purānā Qilā of Delhi into a library shortly before his death. This house in Purānā Qilā was built by Sher Shāh in 1541 as a pleasure-house and was named as Sher Mandal.¹⁸ It is an octagonal building of granite and red sandstone and is two storied.

The magnificent buildings erected by Humāyūn at Agra was known as Khāna-i-Tilism. Its main portion contained three buildings of which Khāna-i-Sa'dat is one in the middle and octagonal in shape. In its upper room was the library where there was a prayer carpet (jai nimag), books, gilded pen cases

(qalamdān), portfolios (Juzdān), picture books and beautiful specimens of calligraphy.¹⁹

Humāyūn fell down from the stairs of his library situated in Purānā Qilā, Delhi and expired on Sunday, January 26, 1556 at about sun set.²⁰

Humāyūn's contribution, within such a short and disturbed period, to the establishment of libraries and encouragement for the love of books is a praiseworthy and notable achievement.

Akbar, the greatest of the Moghul emperors succeeded Humāyūn . The second battle of Pānipat (November 5, 1556) closed the chapter of the Afgans and heralded the real beginning of the Moghul empire in India.

Akbar so long ruled under the shadows of his guardian Bairām Khān and the court ladies. The death of Bairām in 1561 and of his mother in 1562 made Akbar free to rule by himself till his death in 1605. With the fearless energy of Alexander, Akbar conquered the entire northern India and brought peace and prosperity to this war-torn land. This socio-economic change contributed largely to the progress and development of the cultural life in all its branches specially in painting, writing and illustrating books, translating books from other languages and in establishing libraries. As a result besides the Imperial library "to which probably no parallel then existed or even existed in the world" innumerable private libraries and

libraries attached to educational institutions flourished during this period.

Akbar though unlettered was a very cultured man with a strong desire for learning. He had refined and very tolerant taste and genuine intellectual curiosity. "My father (Akbar) used to hold discourse with learned men of all persuasion, particularly the Pandits and the intelligent persons of Hindusthan. Though he was illiterate, yet from constantly conversing with learned and clever persons, his language was so ~~it~~ polished that no one could discover from his conversation that he was entirely uneducated. He understood even the elegance of poetry and prose so well that it is impossible to conceive of any more proficient²¹".

The above lines from the pen of his son and successor aptly proves his (Akbar's) cultural trend of mind and passionate genuine interest for knowledge. Not only he made himself fit through discussions and conversations but he maintained a very rich library and appointed experienced and learned people to read aloud books to him every day. In this connection Abu-'l-Fazl writes:- "His Majesty's library is divided into several parts; some of the books are kept within and some without the Harem . . . Experienced people bring them daily and read them before His Majesty, who hears every book from the beginning to the end. At whatever page the readers daily stop, His Majesty

· makes with his own pen a sign, according to the number of pages; and rewards the readers with presents of cash either in gold or silver, according to number of leaves read out by them. Among books of renown, there are no historical facts of the past ages or curiosities of science, or interesting points of philosophy with which His Majesty, a leader of important sages, is acquainted. He does not get tired of learning, a book over again but listens to the reading of it with more interest." ²² Thus Akbar became conversant with the different philosophical ideas, literary trends and historical facts."

Akbar inherited an Imperial library from his father and out of his love for collection of books he enriched the library to a large extent. These collections came mostly from some of the private libraries and also from the libraries of Guzrat; Jaunpur, Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal and Deccan. ²³ Further additions were made by the writings and translations done at his court and also from presentations from the nobles and high officers.

Faizi had a good collection consisting of 4,300 Mss. in his library. After his death the collection was transferred to the Imperial library, ²⁴ and it was entered and numbered along with the Imperial collection. Faizi's collection was divided into three different sections as (1) Poetry, music, medicine

and astrology (2) Philosophy, philology, Sufism, astronomy and geometry and (3) Theology, law, commentaries etc. There were several copies of the same title. For example there were 101 copies of Nal ²⁵ Daman.

During the conquest of Gujrat the library of I'timād Khān Gujratī was acquired by the emperor and it was transferred to form a part of the Imperial library. ²⁶ When Gujrat was finally conquered Mirzā Khān Khānān rejoined the court and in the 34th year he presented to the emperor a copy his Persian translation of Bābar's Chegta-i-memoirs (Wāqi'at-i- ²⁷ Bābari).

By order of the emperor many important works originally written in Sanskrit and other languages were translated into Persian. The Mahābhārat was translated by Persian scholars like Naqib Khān, Maulanā Abul Qadir of Badāon and Shayykh Sultān of Thāneswar and it contained nearly one thousand verses and was named as Razm-Nāmā or the book of wars. In 1589 A.D. Badāuni translated Rāmāyan after working hard for four years. Hāzi Ibrāhim Sirhind translated Atharvaveda; Fayzi the Lilābati, Hindu mathematical work; Mokammal Khān of Gujrat translated Tajak, a well-known work on Astronomy; Mirzā Abdur Rahim Khān translated the memoirs of Bābur from Turkish into Persian and Maulanā Shāh Māhammad of

Shāhbād translated the History of Kashmir from Kashmirian; Mujam'1-Buldan, a treatise on towns and countries was translated by several scholars from Arabic. Besides these, translations of Nal-Daman and Kalilawa Damna and, Tārikh-i-Alfi, history of ²⁸ one thousand years were done by learned scholars.

It is evidently clear from the above that during the time of Akbar there was a regular translation bureau and many important volumes were added to the ²⁹ Imperial library.

Moreover the Imperial library and his personal library were enriched by many original literary works. Among the important verse writers special mention should be made of Ghizali, Faizi, Muhammad Husain Naziri of Nishapur, Sayyid Jamāluddin Urfi of Shieraj etc. Jarome Kavier, an outstanding Jesuit wrote several Persian works on Christian religion and philosophy ³⁰ and presented them to Akbar and Jahāngir.

In order to enhance the production of beautiful volumes Akbar encouraged calligraphy and painting. He loved well illustrated books written with a fine handwriting. The author of Āin-i-Akbari writes that during the time of Akbar there existed eight modes of writing as Suls, Tauqi, ³¹ Muhaqqaq, Naskh, Raihān, Riqā, Ghubar and Taliq. Akbar was very fond of Nasta'liq handwriting and the famous master of said writing, Muhammad Hussain of Kashmir was

honoured by the title "Zarrin-Kalam" or "God pen"³²
 Akbar being fond of good handwriting did not care
 for the choicest printed books presented by the 1st
 Jesuit Mission.³³ But he was not so hostile to
 printed books like the Duke Federigo of Urbino
 who would neither own them nor allow them in ~~his~~³⁴
 their collections.

The first Jesuit mission presented to Akbar
 a huge and well bound Bible in four languages (He-
 brew, Chaldee, Latin and Greek) in seven volumes.
 This Royal Polygot was edited by Montanus and
 printed at Antwerp by Plantyn in 1569 - 1572 for
 King Philip II. This volume, which was returned by
 Akbar to the Fathers was in the Catholic library
 of Lucknow till 1857. Thus Akbar possessed many
 European books and he showed his European book
 collection to the Fathers of the Third Mission in 1595.
 He also requested them to take some of the books as
 they required. The Fathers received from Akbar's
 library the Royal Bible and concordances, the
 Summa and other works of S. Thomas Aquinas, the
 works of the scholastic writer Domingo de Soto, of
 S. Antonino of Forciglione, of Pope Sylvester (d.
 1003) and Cardinal Cajetan (1470-1524), the Chro-
 nics of S. Francis, the History of the Popes, the
 Laws of Portugal, the Commentaries of Alfonso
 Albuquerque, the writings of the Brazil missionary

of Juan Espeleta of Navarre (a relative of Jerome Xavier, who died in 1555), the Exercitia Spiritualia of S. Ignatius, the Constitutions of the Society, and a Latin Grammar written by the Jesuit Emmanuel Alvarez (1526-1582). Of several of these Akbar had
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duplicates.

The Jesuit Fathers, besides the European books presented to him Persian translations of Christ's life and Christian religious books. Akbar greatly admired the books and he used to read them often.

"While Fr. Pigneiro was ⁱⁿ the town of Agra (1602), Fr. Xavier, who was also there, presented to the King a treatise in Persian on the life, miracles, and doctrines of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which the king had himself asked, and which he longed to see. Hence, he showed that he esteemed it much and he had it often read by his great Captain Agiscoa ('Aziz Koka), who took so much pleasure in it that he asked the father for another copy, and it was already so much talked of among the Grandees that there was hope God would by this means make known to those infidels and unbelievers His only Son our Lord. After this, the King asked the Father for another
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book on the life of the Apostles".

Mr. George Ranking of Oxford, ex-secretary to the Board of Examiners in Calcutta possessed a copy of Xavier's Persian translation of Lives of the

Apostles. The book in several places bears the seal Muhammad Akbar, Parishah-i-Ghāzi, 1013 (i.e. 1604) which shows that it belonged to the Royal library of Akbar.³⁷

The emperor loved beautifully written and profusely illustrated Mss. For his Imperial library Akbar secured a richly illustrated Ms. of Razm-Nāmā, which costed him about £ 40,000. One such copy is now in the Jaipur Durbār Library. Due to royal patronage innumerable able and master calligraphists and artists devoted their lives for perfection of his art.

Abul-Fazl described in detail their names and activities in Āin-i-Akbari.³⁸ More than hundred³⁹ painters during this time became famous masters. His libraries contained innumerable books ornamented with delicate paintings. The twelve volumes of the story of Hamzah contained not less than one thousand and four hundred illustrations. Volumes of his library like Chingiznāmā, the Zafarnāmā, the Razm nāmā, the Rāmāyan, Nal-Damayanti, Kalilahwa Damanah etc. were all illustrated.⁴⁰ In order to encourage the art of painting the emperor established a royal studio.⁴¹

Akbar died in October 1605. After his death an inventory of the Imperial properties housed in the fort of Agra was taken. Two European authors Manrique and De Lact copied the inventory from

official records when we find that the Imperial library contained 24,000 illustrated and well bound volumes. The approximate price of the collection was Rs.6,463,731. The average price of each volume should be £ 27 to £ 30 and similarly according to the rate of exchange total valuation should be £ 737,169.⁴²

Mulla Pir Muhammad who was one of the tutors of the King served as the superintendent of the library.⁴³

Besides the Imperial collection innumerable libraries did flourish during this time and they were maintained by the nobles, important citizens and also by some of queens of the emperors. One of his queen Salimā Sultānā Begam who was^a very accomplished lady maintained a library of her own.⁴⁴ She wrote⁴⁵ many Persian poems under the non-de-plume of Makfi. Badāuni became embarrassed as he or some body else lost the book - the original "Thirty two thrones" or Badāuni's translation which Salimā Begam had been studying at that time.⁴⁶ Gul Badan Begam, the daughter of Bābur and authoress of Humāyūn Nāmā⁴⁷ was ~~very~~ also a very learned lady and she collected books for her personal library.

Among the libraries maintained by the nobles the libraries of Abdur Rahim Khān-i-Khānan, who was the governor of Ahmedabad in the first stage of his career and also a scholar and the library of Shaikh

Faizi ~~deserves~~ deserves a special mention.

Khān-i-Khānan possessed a big personal library which was maintained by a staff of 95 men. The personnel included the librarian, book-binder, scribe, translator etc. and most of the books of the library were written and presented by their respective authors. Many seekers of wisdom used to visit the library for "study and self-improvement"⁴⁸. Maulanā Ibrahim Naqqash, who was a scholar, writer, book-binder and gilder served as Kitābdār of Khān-i-Khānan's library. Mir Baqi was the Nizām or the highest officer of the library.⁴⁹ Niāmatullah, the author of Makhzan-i-Afghani sometimes acted as the librarian of Khān Khānan Abdur Rahim and then as a historiographer ~~of~~ at Emperor Jahāngir's court.⁵⁰

Shaikh Faizi had his own private library which contained 4300 books. After his death in 1595 his collection was transferred to the Imperial library⁵¹ at Agra.

Sīpha Salar Munim Khān, Khān Khānan, the governor of Jaunpur during the time of Akbar was a great patron of learning and he built a bridge over the Gumti near Jaunpur. He had also a hobby of collecting books for his library. Bahādur Khān Uzbek, his friend presented him with a copy of Kulliyah Sa'di. He also purchased books like Diwān of Mirzā Kāmran⁵² for his library.

Salim, after seven days of his father Akbar's death, ascended the throne at Agra and assumed the title - Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahāngir Pādshāh Ghāzi. Though fond of pleasures Jahāngir was a man of refined tastes and inherited some of the good qualities of his father and great grand father Bābur. His Tuzuk amply testifies his literary tastes and love of books.

Jahāngir was also a patron of learning and promoter of the cause of education. He ordered that the properties of a rich hierless man should be utilised for building and repairing Madrashas, monasteries and libraries and "repaired even those Madrashas that had for thirty years been the dwelling places of birds and beasts and filled with students and professors."⁵³ Thus through imperial patronage Agra maintained her tradition of being a centre of learning and abode of scholars.

The emperor not only inherited a rich Imperial library but considerably enriched the collection and added a picture gallery to it. During his time Maktub Khān was the superintendent of both the Imperial library and Picture gallery.⁵⁴

Besides the Imperial library the emperor had a personal library and his love of books was so great that when he went to Gujrat, his personal library moved along with him. At Gujrat he presented books to the Ulemas from the library. Jahāngir describes

the presentation as follows:-

"On the 16th, Tuesday, the elite of Gujrat came to me for the second time. I again gave them Khil'ah, travelling expenses and land and then allowed to go. I gave every one of them from my personal library a book like Tafsiri Kashshaf, Tafsiri Husaini, Rauzatul-Ahbab and on the back of each book wrote the date of the arrival in Gujrat and the bestowing of books."⁵⁵

To enrich his library as well as to satisfy his craving for love of books Jahāngir used to purchase Mss at a very high price. Martin writes - "The manuscript for which Jahāngir paid 3000 gold rupees - a sum equivalent to £ 10,000 - would not fetch £2000 at a sale in Paris today. Through the following centuries, the same love for old books prevailed and ridiculous prices were paid for them, as high in proportion as Americans now pay for Rembrandts and Van Dycks."⁵⁶

Jahāngir enriched and patronised the art of book illustration to a considerable degree. As Akbar had a great fascination for life like portrait paintings, Jahāngir with the idea that "actual likeness might afford a great surprise to the reader than mere description," appointed artists to illustrate his "Jahāngir-Nāmāh" with life-like pictures of animals that were brought to him by Muqarrb Khān from the sea port of Goa.⁵⁷

In order to maintain the huge Imperial library he had a large staff including copyists. When he completed writing Tuzuk he ordered the scribes of his library to copy the same volume and distribute them to the grandees of the country. Shāh-Jahān received the first copy. Jahāngir also patronised the art of calligraphy and honoured the eminent calligraphists of the age. The ~~emperor~~ emperor presented the eminent calligraphist Shaikh Farid Bakhari with a robe of honour, a jewelled sword, a pen and inkstand and conferred the title "Mir Bakshi" on him. He said - "I regard thee as Lord of the sword and the Pen"
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(Sahibu - s - Saif-wa-l-qalam)

Nūr Jahān, the highly cultured consort of the emperor was also a lover of books. She maintained her private library and purchased a copy of the Diwān of Kāmran for three mohurs. The copy is now preserved in the Khuda Baksh Libray, Patna and the following lines occur on the first page of the Diwān -

"Three Muhur the price of this tresure. Nawāb
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Nūr-un - Nisā Begam".

Shaikh Farid Bukhari was one of the grandees of Jahāngir's court and was for a long time the governor of Lahor and Ahmedabad. He maintained a personal library and bought - Diwān of Hasan Dehlavi" for the same. The volume is now in possession of Khuda Baksh
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Library, Patna.

Shah Jahān also like his predecessors patronised learning and education.

He encouraged learned men with gifts and presents and many poets, theologians and historians flourished in his time. Among them special mention should be made of Abdūl Hamid Lāhori, author of Pādshāh-Nāmā; Aminai Qazwini, author of another Pādshāh-Nāmā; Muhammad Salih, author of 'Amal-i-Salih; Inayat Khān, author of Shāh-Jahān-Nāmā. Under the patronage of Dārā Shukūh, the eldest son of the emperor many important books were written and translated into Persian.

Besides these translations and original ~~work~~ works on various field of knowledge four voluminous dictionaries were compiled and dedicated to Shāh Jahān - a) Farhang-i-Rashidi and b) Muntakhab-ul-Lughat-i-Shāhjahāni by Abdur Rashid -ul-Tatvi; chahar Ansar Danish by Amanullah and Shahid-i-Sadiq by Md.Sadiq, which deals with religious, philosophical, political ethical and cosmographical matters.

The emperor founded the Imperial college at Delhi and repaired the college named as Dār-ul-Baqā. It is very natural that these educational institutions had their respective libraries. The emperor though was not very particular about book-collection and library development still he used to listen regularly books read to him in the late night, Sir J. Sarcar writes- "At about 8-30 P.M. he returned to

harem. Two and sometimes three hours were here spent in listening to songs by women. Then His Majesty retired to bed and was read to sleep. Good readers sat behind a purdah which separated them from the royal bed chamber and read aloud books on travel, lives of saints and prophets and histories of former kings -- all rich in instruction. Among them, the life of Timūr and autobiography of Bābur were his special favourites. ⁶²

Johann Albert Von Mandelslo, a young German arrived at Surat in April, 1638. Later in the same year he made tour of Ahmadabad, Cambay, Agra and Lahore. He wrote in his travel diary that the Imperial library of Shāh Jahān had 24,000 books nicely bound. ⁶³ The chief librarian was known as Dārōgha-Kitāb-Khānā. ⁶⁴ The names of 'Abdur Rahman, Rashid Āli, the calligraphist; Mir Salih, Mir Sayyid Āli, I'tirmad Khān; 'Inayet Khān, son of Zafar Khān are mentioned in connection of the post. ⁶⁵

During this time there were good libraries managed by the Jesuit Fathers both at Agra and Delhi. The libraries contained books written in oriental languages by Fathers as well as oriental documents of religious character. The Agra college library was partly looted and burnt on the advice of Shāh Jahān while Ahmad Shāh Abdāli looted in 1759 the Delhi library except the books - *Exceptis Libris Persicis* and

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Arabicis et Europeis.

Father Henry Busi first went to Delhi in 1650. His mission was to revive the cause of the Christian missionaries at the Mughul court. In order to have his purpose fulfilled he contacted Prince Darā and some important nobles of the court. Some of the Muslim nobles maintained libraries of Christian literature. Father Busi had a discussion with a 'master of the Muslims' who had a large library - 'like an Arabic Escorial' containing books on the different aspects of Christianity.

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In June 1656 Aurangzeb assumed the Imperial dignity, He was a man of high intellectual powers, a brilliant writer, a skilled administrator, undaunted soldier and a pious Moslem king.

He encouraged Islamic learning, founded a number of schools and colleges, repaired the old Madrasahs but at the same time ordered his governors to destroy Hindu schools and temples and put down their religious practices.

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Aurangzeb was highly religious. Every day after prayer at 2 P.M. he used either to read Qurān, copying it, hunting through Arabic jurisprudence or read the books and pamphlets of the Islamic religion. It is evidently clear from his last will that he saved a sum of Rs.305 which he earned by selling the copies of Qurān written or copied by him.

He being passionately devoted to Islamic law and theology, ordered eminent jurists to compile the Fatawa-i-'Alamgiri under the direction of Mulla Nizam and ~~for~~ collected books on Tafsirs, works on Hadis, Fiqh etc. These volumes enriched the collection of the Imperial library.⁷¹ He also added a new collection to the Imperial library by transferring the library of Muhammad Gawan from Bidar.⁷²

Like his predecessors Aurangzeb entertained and honoured a group of expert calligraphists in his court. Prince Dārā Shikuh and princess Zib-un-nisā were trained in the art of calligraphy by the famous calligraphist Aqa Abdur Rashid while the emperor had his own training under the guidance of Syed Ali Tabrizi, the librarian of the Imperial library.⁷³

Muhammad Salih, was the Nāzim of the Imperial library and Muhammad Mansur and Sayyid Ali-al-Husaini were the Mahatmims. The former Mahatmim was honoured with the title of Makramat Khān.⁷⁴

Emperor's daughter Zeb-un-nisā was a very cultured lady. She was a poet, and ^{at} her request Mulla Safiuddin translated Imām Razi's - Tafsire Kabir into Persian and named it Zebut Tafasir. She was a "sedulous collector of books and had a large library(⁷⁵ Ma'asiri 'Alamgiri) for the use of scholars.

The death of Aurangzeb on 3rd March 1707 heralded the disintegration of the Moghul empire and his sons

in order to get hold of the throne started the bloody feud. Among his successors Bahādur Shāh(1707-1712) Muhammad Shāh (1719-48) and Shāh Ālam II(1759-1806) being cultured and men of literary tastes tried to continue the Moghul tradition inspite of the vissicitude of fortune and the invasion of Nādir ~~Shāh~~ Shāh in 1733 A.D.

Bahādur Shāh founded some more colleges and encouraged the learned men of the society.

Nādir Shāh invaded India during the time of the next ruler and ordered a general massacre of the Delhi city. The conqueror carried away with him all the crown jewels, the famous Kohinoor diamond, the peacock throne and many valuable and illustrated Persian manuscripts from the Imperial library.

Shāh Ālam II tried to revive the old glory of the Imperial library and he sincerely started to collect books for the same. "It is mentioned in the 'Ibrat-Nāmāh that Ghulam Qadir, the fiend in human shape, who had most cruelly deprived the monarch of his eyes only three days before, went into the jewel house and took out a chest and a box of jewels, several copies of the Quran and eight large baskets of books out of the Imperial library." ⁷⁶

Among the contemporary libraries the valuable collections of Mahārāja Chikka Deva Rāya(1672-1704 A.D.) of Mysore and of Mahārāja Sawāi Jai Singh II(1636-1743 A.D.) of Jaipur deserve special mention. Chikka Deva's library of rarest Sanskrit, philosophical and historical works was destroyed by Tipu Sultān. Jai Singh, being highly

interested in Astronomy collected books on Astronomy even from Europe. The library of Jai Singh contained volumes like Euclid's Elements, books on plains and spherical trigonometry, La Hire's Tabulee Astronomical, Hamstead's Historia etc. After his death "Jai Singh's son Jagat Singh gave this valuable library to a courtesan and it was thus destroyed and its books distributed among its base relations."

It will be interesting to note that during the days of the later Moghuls the Jesuit Fathers carried with them many Indian books to France mainly for the library of Louis the XV(1729-1735).

MOGHUL ARCHIVES:

In the tradition of Bagdad and Cairo the Imperial Moghuls used to maintain and preseve the important government documents and state papers. The Moghul Govt. was known as the Kāghazi-Rāj or paper government as most of the official records and transactions were written on paper.

The Moghul courts maintained many news writers and clerks x to record every official transactions and orders in detail. There were 14 such news writers in the court of Akbar. Du Jarrie and Abul Fazl's writings corroborate the fruth.

Regarding the duties of the News-writers(Wā'qia-Navises) Abul-Fazl writers - "Their's duty is to write down the orders and doings of His Majesty and whatever

the heads of the Departments report"⁸² .While Du Jarrie informs us the following:-

"The king is attended by a number of secretaries whose duty is to record every word that he speaks."⁸³ During the time of Aurangzeb the weekly

reports of the news-writers and secretaries were read to His Majesty regularly at 9 P.M. by the lady officials in order to keep him abreast to the happenings

of his kingdom.⁸⁴ Manuchi, the Venetian tells us that Aurangzeb, when sending an embassy to Persia sent with it the usual officials, a waqi'ahnavis⁸⁵ and a Khufiyah-navis.

The Moghul archives mainly maintained the following state documents:-⁸⁶

- (1) Qaia or daily reports of the Imperial court
- (2) Royal orders (Akham)
- (3) Official correspondence includes the Imperial letters, letters of the royal family, letters of the grandees amongst themselves and addressed to the Emperor; officer's correspondence and field despatches (Fateh Nāmāh, Tūmār)
- (4) Govt. orders issued from the various departments.
- (5) Miscellaneous records like - will(Wasiat Nāmāh) statistical accounts, official annals, news letters.
- (6) Court chronicles include also the letter books of the Munshis.

All these above named documents and records were generally preserved both at the capitals of the central as well as provincial governments during the time of the Moghuls. The Imperial chancery or Daftar-Khānā was under a Dārogā or officer-in-charge of the records. The provincial Daftar Khānās were under the Chief Ministers or Dewans of the respective provinces.

Even during the time of the Moghuls important records and documents of sister states were preserved in the Daftar-Khānās. This is amply corroborated by the presence of a copy of a farman of Shāh Tahmās of Persia in the Daftar-Khānā of Akbar at Agra and an undated Shāh Jahāni farman either possibly of Bijapur or Golkonda sultanates in the provincial Daftar Khānā at Baganagar, Hyderabad.⁸⁷

The building which was used as the Daftar-Khānā of Akbar still exists at Fatehpur Sikri. "It is a big hall 48½ feet long and 28½ feet wide with an enclosed varandah and a frontal court. It is built on a platform to the south of Akbar's bedroom."⁸⁸

William Finch(1611), Joannes de Lact(1593-1649) and Sebastien Manrique(1640), the European travellers visited the Daftar-khānā at Agra.⁸⁹ Similar Record rooms were maintained in the Delhi fort and it existed during the time of Aurangzīb and Bāhādur Shāh.

Libraries
of
The
Minor Muslim Kingdoms

So far we have dwelt upon the contributions made by the Turko-Afghan and Moghul rulers towards the development of Indian libraries. But besides them, many small Muslim kingdoms sprang up all over India and they also made valuable contributions in this field.

In order to complete the survey of the history of medieval Indian libraries we shall present here the achievements of those smaller kingdoms.

The Bahamani Kingdom :

The Bahamani kingdom which was founded by Afghan Hassan Gangu ~~Bahmani~~ in 1347 A.D. deserves special mention. The Bahamani kings who continued their rule upto 1526 A.D. and stretched their empire from sea to sea were great patrons of learning and founded many colleges and libraries. Mujahid Shāh Bahamani founded in 1378 a college for the education of the orphans.⁹⁰ Ahmad Shāh built a magnificent college near Gulbarga.⁹¹ Muhammad Shāh Bahamani II built another imposing college at Bidar which is one of the many beautiful remains of the grandeur

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of the Bahamanis . All these colleges had their respective libraries along with them. The Bidar college library contained 3000 volumes for the use of the staff and students.

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Besides the college libraries, the kings and nobles used to maintain their personal libraries.

Mahmud Gāwān who served the Bahmani kingdom as minister in three successive reigns was a very simple man and fond of learning. The military record of Muhammad Shāh III's (1463-82) reign due to a wise and honest policy of Mahmud Gāwān is indeed one of triumphs. On the return of Mahmud Gāwān's victorious expedition he was promoted to high rank, the Queen-mother called him her brother and the king gave him a suit of his own robes and honoured him by a visit of three weeks.

Ferishta tells the story of his response to the royal honours showered on him which shows his attitude to the library:-

"On Mahmud Shāh's leaving the house of the minister. Mahmud Gavan, retiring to his chamber, disrobed himself of his splendid dress, threw himself on the ground and wept plenteously; after which he came out, put on the habit of a dervish, and calling together all the most deserving holy and learned men, and syeds of Bidar, distributing among them most of his money, jewels, and other wealth, reserving, only his elephants, horses and library, saying: "Praise be to

God, I have escaped temptation, and am now free from danger."

Mullā Shamsuddin asked him why he had given away everything but his library, his elephants, and horses. He replied: "When the king honoured me with a visit, and the Queen-mother called me brother, my evil passions began to prevail against my reason; and the struggle between vice and virtue was so great in my mind, that I became distressed even in the presence of his Majesty, who kindly enquired the cause of my concern. I was obliged to feign illness in excuse of my conduct; on which the king, advising me to take some repose, returned to his palace. " I have, therefore," said the minister, "parted with wealth, the cause of this temptation to evil". His library, he said, he had retained for the use of students, and his elephants and horses he regarded as the king's, lent him only for a season. After this day, the minister always wore plain apparel; when at leisure from State affairs he retired to his own mosque and college, where he spent his time in the society of the⁹⁴ learned and persons eminent for piety and virtue."

Thus Mahmud Gāwān retained his personal library which contained about 35,000 manuscripts till his death (i.e. April 1481) and kept it open for the use⁹⁵ of the students and learned men.

Bijapur

Bijapur and Golconda had the credit of producing some learned kings who patronised men of letters and established educational institutions and libraries.

Bijapur in its pre-Muslim days had the reputation as a seat of learning and the magnificent three storied college made of granite stands as a living example of the past. It was converted into a mosque.

The Ādil Shāhi rulers were great patrons of learning and lover of books. Rafi-ud-Din, a close associate and an high officer of Āli Ādil Shāh I (1558-1580) described in his Tazkirat-ul-muluk the love of reading and books of Āli Ādil Shāh I. The Sultān "had a great inclination towards the study of books and he had procured many books connected with every kind of knowledge, so that a coloured library had become full. Nearly sixtymen, calligraphists, gilders of books, book-binders and illuminators were busy doing their work whole day in the library." ⁹⁶ The Sultān was so fond of books that even during the time of tour or military campaign he used to carry books with him. Once it happened that "He (Āli Ādil Shāh I) had selected books which filled four boxes which he kept with him in journey as well as in his ~~pr~~ palace. By chance in a journey when he reached the destination at the end of the day it began to rain heavily and the streams

became so flooded that it became impossible to cross some of their passages (i.e. fordable places). In these circumstances the army became dispersed. When His Majesty reached the destination he was reminded of the boxes of books. After some investigation it was found that the boxes had gone with the Royal Treasury by some other road and people (accompanying them) had stayed (at some other) place. At this he became very angry and said, "I have told you thousand times that the boxes of books should not be separated from me in any case, but it has been of no avail". At that very moment one of the nobles was sent to fetch the library and so long as the boxes did not arrive he remained much restless." ⁹⁷

Ferishta, the great historian and author of Tārīkhī-Ferishta was permitted by Ibrahim Ādil Shāh II to work in the royal library.

From the recently discovered pair of Ruq'as or registered government documents it is evidently clear that one Hindu scholar Waman Pandit bin Anant of the Shesh family of Bijapur was the royal librarian. The documents further state that as a measure of security for the valuable royal manuscript collection Naro bin Gangadhar and Husain Khān in 1567 and Manjan Khān in 1575 each with high position in the Ādilshāhī hierarchy stood guarantee for the safety and careful preservation of the important charge entrusted to Waman Pandit, the

librarian. The annual salary of the librarian was one thousand Hun or about Rs.3500. It is believed that Waman Pandit, a grandson of Anant, the librarian left Bijapur as Muhamad Adil Shāh (1627-1656) wanted him to embrace Islam.⁹⁸

Mr. Fergusson with regard to the Imperial Library writes in his book:-

" Some of its books are curious and interesting to any one acquainted with Arabic and Persian literature. All the most valuable manuscripts were, it is said, taken away by Aurangzeb in cart loads and what remains are literally only a remnant, but a precious one to the persons in charge of the building who show them with mournful pride and regret."⁹⁹

The remnants of the royal library can be found in the Asari Mahal at Bijapur.

Bengal:-

Murshid Quli Ja'far Khān, Nawāb of Bengal who ruled from 1704 to 1725 "possessed very extensive learning and paid great respect to men who were eminent for their piety or ~~an~~ erudition. He wrote with great elegance and was a remarkable fine penman."¹⁰⁰ It is very natural that a very cultured Nawāb who used to copy Qurān a few hours everyday and who "maintained above two thousand readers, bards and chanters, who were constantly employ-¹⁰¹ed in reading the Qurān and in other acts of devotion",

had a magnificent library of his own.

Alivardi Khān occupied the Masnad of Bengal from 1740 to 1751. He also encouraged learning and his court at Murshidabad became the home of learned men. One of them Mir Muhammad 'Alī had a library which contained 2000 volumes.¹⁰²

Gujrat:

Sultān Ahmad, the independent ruler of Gujrat (846 A.H.) was a lover of education and established schools, colleges and libraries. Regarding the royal library of Sultān Ahmad it is written in Tārīkh-i-Badāyuni that after his death his son Muhammad Shāh taking out books from this same royal library, entrusted them to the students of Madrasa Shami-Burhani.¹⁰³ When Akbar conquered Gujrat he distributed some of the books from the same library to the nobles.

Besides the royal library there were many other personal libraries. Sayyid Muhammad Shāh Ālam (died in 880 A.D.) the great saint of Gujrat had a personal library.¹⁰⁴ The library improved during the time of his successor Sayyid Jaffar Badr'Ālam. The former collected rare books for his library from Arabia and Persia. The latter founded a Madrashah and the library was a part of the college.¹⁰⁵

Jaunpur :

During the fifteenth century the Sharqi kingdom

of Jaunpur became an important centre of learning. Its claim to the intellectual leadership of the contemporary India is borne out by the fact that Jaunpur produced a number of scholars and religious reformers who led men and movements. It was known as Shiraz of India. There at that time developed twenty schools of thought,¹⁰⁶ each having on its roll several hundred scholars.

The Sharqi kings were enlightened rulers and they truly patronized authors and scholars. Jaunpur thus became a centre of many good libraries. The cultural eminence and fame of good libraries attracted many scholars from different parts of India. Among the libraries, the libraries of Maulavi Maashuq Ali and of the Mufti Syed Abul-Baqa were well known. The former had a collection of 5,000 volumes.¹⁰⁷

Khandesh

The Deccani Sultāns failed to defend themselves against the onrush of the powerful Mughuls. Akbar conquered Khandesh but the kingdom was not finally annexed to the Empire till the reign of Shāh Jahān.

The Faruqi Sultāns of Khandesh respected scholars, poets and Sufis and they also had a fine library. Ferish-ta visited this library and used some of its books. From one of the books he copied the history of the Faruqi rulers.¹⁰⁸ The British Museum has in its possess-

-ion a letter written to Raja Āli Khān, king of Khāndesh by Malik-ush-Shuna Faizi where he requested the king ~~to~~ to send with copies of some pages of Tughluq Name of the said library.¹⁰⁹

Oudh :

During the decaying days of the Mughal empire the inevitable centrifugal tendency was manifest in different parts of the empire and the provincial viceroys made themselves independent of the titular Delhi emperor. The important of them were the Subahdars of the Deccan, Oudh and Bengal.

The founder of the kingdom of Oudh was Sa'ādāt Khān who was appointed governor in 1724, The ~~time~~^{line} ruled Oudh for eight generations with this capital at Lucknow.

The generosity and love of wisdom of Nawāb Āsaf-ud-Dawla (1775-1795 A.D.) encouraged establishment of Madrasas, libraries as well as arts and crafts schools at Lucknow. Thus Lucknow became a very important centre of Islamic culture and began to challenge the cultural dominance of Delhi.

Among the many important libraries in and around Lucknow the Imperial library deserves special mention. From the description of Sprenger, an English-^{man} ~~man~~ who visited Lucknow in 1848 we collect information of the library which stood in the old Daulat

Khana near Gomti. At that time the library was in a neglected and ruined condition. The description of Sprenger runs as follows:-

" I visited the library along with 'Allami Tafa-ddul Khān. It has books to the number of approximately three lacs and a servant is deputed for every hundred books.

"Books of different languages like Arabic, Persian and English, both prose and poetry, were there. Besides Qat'at of ~~Basma~~ penmen, there were fine specimens of Indian, Iraniaa, European and Turkish paintings, in such large numbers that it would require Noah's life to see them all. I had the opportunity of seeing literary books in countless numbers books like Madarik, Masalik, Mafatih, Kashkul, Bahr-ul-Anwar, etc.

"It has numerous books written in the hand of the authors themselves. On enquiry the Muhtamim told me that it contains some seven hundred such books. When Delhi was ruined, the greater part of that library came to the Royal Library of Lucknow.

"The truth is that this library is rare and valuable to such an extent that even the precious stones of the Royal ~~Library~~ Library can
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hardly equal it."

Mr.S.A.Zafar Nadir stated that he had seen

many books bearing the seal of the Royal ~~Library~~ Library of Oudh in various libraries of India which corroborates the statement of Sprenger. ¹¹¹

In about 1789 Mirzā Sulaiman Shikoh, third son of Shāh Ālam fled to Lucknow where he was warmly received by Nawāb Āsaf-ud-Dawla. He was a poet and great patron of poets and authors. In his library there were several copies of Diwān of Shaikh Ghulam Hamdani Mushafi. The Rampur library has copies of ¹¹² Diwan bearing the seal of Mirzā Sulaiman Shikoh.

LIBRARIES
OF
THE MARĀTHĀ RULERS

In keeping with the traditions of the time Marāthās encouraged learning and patronized the scholars by Dākshana grants. They used to spend a considerable amount under this head. As a result of this money reward the important cities of Marāthā kingdom and the capital city Poona became centres of Sanskrit learning and home of scholars from different parts of India. The last Peshwā Bāji Rāo II spent every year about four lakhs of rupees in Dākshana grant. ¹¹³

It is very natural that as a result of all these cultural activities there grew up libraries all over Marāthā country. The Peshwas also maintained their own libraries. In 1747-48 Bālāji Bāji Rāo for his own library collected about thirty-six manuscripts from Udaipur and in 1755-56 he also purchased fifteen manuscripts. The Peshwas not only procured manuscripts but got other rare and old manuscripts copied. In 1765-66 the first Mādhava Rāo used to spend every month a sum of Rs.31.00 for copying manuscripts of his library. ¹¹⁴

Like the Mughals, Marāthās also maintained a big establishment, the imperial secretariat or Huzur Daftar to preserve all state papers, documents and account books with utmost care and order, complying more than two hundred Karkuns or clerks.¹¹⁵ Besides these each village used to maintain their own records under the care of the Patil. The village record keepers were known as Kulkarni. The records of the Peshwas from the points of view of authenticity and reliability were ideal. The Daftar-khānā maintained a high tradition till the time of Bāji Rāo II when "The Daftar was not only much neglected but its establishment was almost entirely done away and people were even permitted to carry away the records or do with them what they pleased."¹¹⁶

LIBRARIES
ATTACHED TO
HINDU CENTRES OF LEARNING

The contemporary centres of Hindu learning such as, Banaras, Tirhut, Mithilā, Nadiā etc. played important parts in the history of Indian library development. The libraries of these institutions contained huge collection of manuscripts on religion, and philosophy as well as on other subjects like medicine, science and history. Dr. Fryer, who travelled in India in the 17th cy. visited such libraries which were filled with Sanskrit manuscripts "unfolding the mysteries of their religion." ¹¹⁷ During his travel in India Bernier (A.D. 1656 - 1668) visited Banaras. His letter to Monsieur chapelain despatched from Chiras in Persia on 4th October, 1667 is important as it describes the history of Sanskrit learning at Banaras in the 17th cy. Banaras was then a celebrated seat of learning and home of many reputed scholars. A list of about 69 pundits can be found from Kavindra-¹¹⁸ Ghandrodaya. Kavindrācārya was then leader and all these Pandits of Banaras were held in high esteem by Shāh Jahān and his son Dārā.

Kavindrācārya, a renowned Vedic scholar and well versed in all branches of Sanskrit learning was born on the banks of the Godāvāri. But he made Banaras his

abode. He led the deputation of Hindu Pandits to Agra against the pilgrim tax levied by Shāh Jahān on pilgrims of Allahabad and Benaras. He exercised his influence and made the Mogul emperor abolish the tax. Shāh Jahān conferred on him the title Sarvavidyānidhana and also given him a pension, of Rs.2000/-which was stopped by Aurangzeb. Kavindra had a fine collection of manuscripts. The library was catalogued in a classified way. The catalogue was obtained from a certain math of Benaras and it (Kavindrāchārya Sūchi Patra) was published in the Gaekwad's Oriental series. (No.XVII). The library was dispersed after the death of the owner and many of the manuscripts of the said library can be identified as they contain the ~~xxxxxx~~ endorsement "Sarvavidyānidana Kavindrāchārya Saraswatinām Pustakam."

When Bernier reached Benaras he was warmly received by Kavindra in the "University library"¹¹⁹ where he invited six eminent scholars for discussion with Bernier. He wrote ..".... it has its authors on philosophy, works on medicine written in verse and many other kinds of books with which a large hall at Benaras is entirely filled."¹²⁰ These libraries were preserved with passionate zeal and love and it was a difficult task to procure such manuscripts. Bernier wrote- " . . . those books being of great bulk, at least if they were Bets which were shown to me at

Benaras. They are so scarce that my Agah, notwithstanding all his diligence, has not succeeded in purchasing a copy. The gentiles indeed conceal them with much care, lest they should fall into the hands of the mahomedans, and be burnt, as frequently has happened.¹²¹

The above statement is further corroborated by another traveller Theverot who writes - "They have many ancient books all in verse of which they are great lovers."¹²²

These collections of Manuscripts were preserved with passionate care by the learned Hindu scholars during their life time but after their death the collections were decentralized and some of them were destroyed by the then foreign rulers.

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