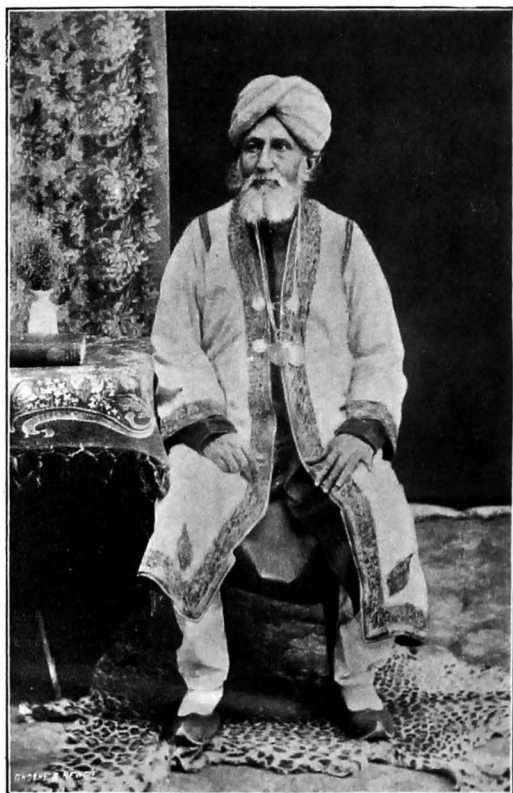


**ZAKA ULLAH OF DELHI**



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ZAKA ULLAH OF DELHI

23 MAR 1929

# ZAKA ULLAH OF DELHI

BY

C. F. ANDREWS

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

BY THE LATE

MAULVI NAZIR AHMAD

MCMXXIX

W. HEFFER & SONS LTD., CAMBRIDGE

*To the  
Teachers and Students  
of  
Santiniketan,  
India*

**PRINTED IN ENGLAND**

AN  
INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR  
BY THE LATE  
MAULVI NAZIR AHMAD, Litt.D.,  
OF DELHI

## Introductory Memoir

BY THE LATE MAULVI NAZIR AHMAD, Litt.D.,  
of Delhi

"In the Name of God, the merciful and the  
compassionate."

EXCEPT in the sacred formula of Islam, "There is no God but One: and Muhammad is the Prophet of God," I have never, during the whole of my long life in this world, seen Musalmans in India so united as on this present very urgent question of their higher education at Aligarh.<sup>1</sup>

If Munshi Zaka Ullah, my friend, had been alive at this critical moment, this unity among all Musalmans with respect to higher education would have been regarded by him as the crown of all his hopes and aims. It is true that during public discussion a few isolated persons have asked whether there was any need of this new rope of learning being pulled by another wheel to draw water for Islam, and whether a Muslim University at Aligarh was needed; but if Zaka Ullah himself had been living to-day I should have been able to point to him as the best answer of all to such superfluous questions, and to say that when the Muslim University reaches its zenith of fame (as it is certain to do in time,

<sup>1</sup> This Memoir by the late Maulvi Nazir Ahmad,—who was one of the chief leaders of the "Aligarh School," i.e. those who followed Sir Syed Ahmad,—was written at a time of great intellectual ferment in North India. The dream of a Muslim University at Aligarh seemed to be at last coming true. This fact accounts for the pointed allusion to Aligarh in Dr. Nazir Ahmad's opening words.

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if God wills) then it will produce such learned men as Zaka Ullah himself.

For my friend, Zaka Ullah, was ever, throughout the whole of his long life, high-minded, pure-hearted, and humble in soul. His intellectual powers were great, and he was gifted with varied knowledge and learning. In his public life he was generous to a remarkable degree, full of public spirit, a good citizen, constitutionally adapted to the present rule. In social character he was both trustworthy and firm of purpose, fulfilling all his obligations. His religious faith remained steadfast and serene. He was peace-loving and peace-making, never angry with others, and never making others angry by his own conduct. Such a man is himself a model of the true Islamic culture which such a Muslim University at Aligarh might be expected to produce.

My own intimate friendship with Munshi Zaka Ullah was life-long. He had been one of my dearest companions on life's difficult journey from the days when we were children together right onward to extreme old age. He was in the Persian class of the Old Delhi College when we were boys together; I was in the Arabic class. It was a home of pleasant memories in the far distant past. Besides this link of language study which bound us together we were class-mates also in mathematics. Here Zaka Ullah was outstanding. He was a favourite pupil of Professor Ramchandra, the greatest mathematician in India in his own generation. Zaka Ullah had the true mathematical genius. He always stood first in his class, and was in consequence especially dear to the heart of his teacher, Professor



Ramchandra. As far as Persian studies were concerned, the education which Zaka Ullah received at the Old Delhi College did not go very far. He had not the same interest in his Persian studies that I had in my own Arabic studies; the bent of his mind was not that way, and he did not take any very great interest in his book-learning on that side. On the other hand, his constant society with Professor Ramchandra continually sowed in his mind and heart a seed of another kind, namely a love for mathematics. It was his genius in this direction, rather than any special aptitude for Persian literature, which made Zaka Ullah famous throughout the length and breadth of North India.

It is well known among Musalmans that Professor Ramchandra, after much hesitation and deep searching of heart, left Hinduism and accepted the Christian faith. Since Zaka Ullah was recognised by all to be his favourite pupil and was constantly seen with him, after he became a Christian, people in Delhi began to have some doubt about Zaka Ullah's own religious position, and wondered whether he too had become influenced by his teacher.

Now I am the oldest and most intimate friend that Zaka Ullah ever had, and I am still surviving. As far as I am aware, all Zaka Ullah's contemporaries and early companions are now dead. I alone (for some reason known to God alone) am still enduring the hardships and sufferings of extreme old age, a condition of things that will not last long; therefore, I have a clear right to speak out before I die. I stand witness at this moment, in the presence of God the Merciful, that as far as one man can know the heart of

another I believe Munshi Zaka Ullah to have been a strict Unitarian Musalman, trusting in one God with His full attributes as understood in Islam.

It was, indeed, almost impossible for a man of such extensive learning and culture as Zaka Ullah, a genius who was able to solve the most difficult problems of mathematical science, to take any other than a strict Unitarian position with regard to the nature and attributes of God. This, however, is a matter which, now that he is dead, concerns him and God alone. I have only drawn attention to it in order to assert the truth of what I know about him owing to my closest friendship with him all through his long life.

The characteristic which I always praised most about Zaka Ullah was his entire unselfishness. He was so humble and childlike in heart that he never thought of himself at all. He always considered the needs of others. In this modern age, owing to the introduction of competitive examinations, athletic championships and prize competitions into our schools and colleges, a kind of self-seeking is often engendered and encouraged which tends to become a life-long habit. It even at times takes the evil form of envy and jealousy at the success of others who have won prizes and high positions.

But this kind of self-seeking, which grudges the advancement of others, was entirely foreign to his own nature and temperament. Indeed, he used to rejoice at the success of others, even more than his own, and would do all that was possible to further it. He was entirely free from petty jealousy and selfish rivalry of others.

As far as worldly greatness was concerned, Zaka Ullah could never be called great in the

world's estimation. He never attained to any high administrative post, and, furthermore, he did not set out to accumulate much worldly wealth. The reason for this was not indeed that he would have been unable to do so even if he had tried, but rather that in pursuit of intellectual knowledge he had neither the time nor inclination to aim at worldly greatness. If he ever had pleasure concerning wealth, this pleasure came to him only when it formed the means of helping his friends, or when he heard that his friends had attained to it. All his mind was set on the attainment of knowledge. He regarded knowledge to be the greatest wealth of all, and the accumulation of knowledge to be the proper form of riches.

Therefore he spent all his years, which were beyond the ordinary span of human existence, in seeking after and acquiring wider learning. Up to the very end of his life his thirst for knowledge remained unquenchable, and his mind was clear up to the day of his death. He departed from this life at last, in extreme old age, saying, "Let me have more knowledge."

He aimed at acquiring knowledge purely for its own sake. His real object was to obtain the ripe wisdom of age. He thought nothing of any worldly advantage which might accrue from it. No idea of profit ever entered into his calculation. In this matter he was singularly pure minded.

After leaving the Old Delhi College and passing through many vicissitudes, Munshi Zaka Ullah entered the Education Department of the Government of India. It was in this connexion that he began seriously to study English, employing the help of a teacher. By sheer hard work, though

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beginning his study of English after middle age had passed by, he acquired in time ability to read difficult English books. But he was never able to speak the language fluently, and very rarely attempted to do so, even for a short time. His mastery of English literature, however, was extensive; and he was at all time an omnivorous reader of English books and periodicals.

Munshi Zaka Ullah did not merely store up a fund of knowledge which profited no one else. We can see this not unfrequently being done by the Yunani physicians,<sup>1</sup> who have acquired medical skill and wisdom. For when they have discovered some special remedy for a disease they hold it back from others in order to make more profit from exclusive possession. But Zaka Ullah acted in exactly the opposite manner. Whatever knowledge he possessed he longed to impart to his fellow countrymen through his writings. Indeed, he produced in his own lifetime such a number of books that it is wonderful to imagine how he could have found the time and energy to bring out so many important publications. He was a prolific author and translator, and lived in his writings.

One very striking quality, which was at all times noticeable in Zaka Ullah, was his extremely conservative character both in his habits of daily life and in his manner of dress, and also in the food which he enjoyed. Even during the years when he was in the Education Department of the Government of India he made no change in his daily routine. Though he had obtained, as the

<sup>1</sup> Yunani literally means "Greek." Dr. Nazir Ahmad is referring to the "Greek" system of medicine, derived from Galen and Hippocrates, and practised in Muhammadan countries. The Arabs took it over from the Greeks.

## INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.    xiii

years passed by, a mastery of English literature and culture and a very extensive knowledge of English books, so that he might be reckoned among his English-educated fellow countrymen as a man of western learning, he never by one hair's breadth ever changed in consequence any of his old-fashioned Hindustani customs and habits, either in dress, or manner of life, or daily food.

Later on, when he became a disciple of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and a strong supporter of the Aligarh movement, even though all the rest wore the Turkish fez, he never put it on; just as he never wore English shoes, or coat, or trousers.

In winter, in Delhi, when the cold was very severe, I used to see Munshi Zaka Ullah, in Hindustani fashion, wearing his padded quilt pyjamas; and as I passed by I would have a good laugh at him for his extreme conservatism. Indeed, by his outward appearance, which remained altogether unchanged, it would have been impossible even to conjecture that his English learning and culture had produced any effect upon his life and character. He would be mistaken for a man of an earlier generation who had never studied English at all.

I, who write these words, am a Musalman; and I have faithfully related how, as far as religious belief is concerned, Munshi Zaka Ullah was also a Musalman. But I wish to add this, that his faith in Islam was entirely untainted by the spirit of religious bigotry, prejudice, or superstition. He was a simple man. In his daily social and religious life he never at any time used to allow distinctions to be made between one man and another in his own estimation on the ground

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of religion. Socially, he mixed with everyone, Hindus, Musalmans, Christians, out of the depth of a full and generous heart. He kept up no religious social distinctions. In this matter he made no difference in his speech or behaviour, whether a man were present or absent.

To-day in India it is a commonplace which is very often repeated, that there exists below the surface an inseparable link between Hindus and Musalmans which is so strong that the one cannot exist without the other; and the British Government keeps peace between them.

But ignorant and short-sighted people, who belong to either of these two religions, have often caused endless disputes to arise in the past, especially through the North of India, by exaggerating the differences between them and by laying undue and mistaken emphasis upon various kinds of daily ceremonial observances in each religion. This is done mainly out of ignorance and prejudice. Nevertheless, I do not consider this state of things to be lasting. Rather, as the poet says:—

If it lives,  
It will live for the night,  
And will have no further existence.

Far-sighted, tolerant, and wise men, like Munshi Zaka Ullah, have already in their own lives found out the art of avoiding these things. They have learnt how to prevent beforehand these painful religious disputes. Their lives are living examples of harmony and concord. Munshi Zaka Ullah was one who observed toleration in every detail, in spirit as well as in letter, in these religious matters. He was entirely free from any narrow sectarianism. In the city of

Delhi he was known everywhere as a peace-maker. Everyone sought him out, and loved and admired him.

After a time, it is to be hoped that those newspapers which are notorious for exciting bitter contention and hatred between the two communities,—the Hindu and the Musalman,—will vanish and come to nothing. Every good man must wish for this to happen.

We, Musalmans, have been accustomed from our childhood to read in our sacred books the different accounts of the friendly relations between the early followers of Islam and their Christian neighbours, especially in the neighbouring kingdom of Abyssinia. Now, lately, we have seen with our own eyes, in the city of Delhi, a living example of the same kind of cordiality existing between Musalman and Christian. For the friendship between Munshi Zaka Ullah and the writer of his biography, Mr. Andrews, is of this character.

Neither of them had any worldly object to pursue in cementing their devoted friendship. Their love for each other was pure and disinterested. Both of them had penetrated deep down into the inner fundamental truth of religion itself, apart from creeds and dogmas. Their mutual affection, which was so profound and sincere, was really love for the sake of God. It did not depend on man.

There is a Persian proverb which runs as follows in the original text:—

“The friendship of sincere friends is the same,  
Whether they are present or absent.”

This simple act of undertaking to write a biography of his old friend after his death, and

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thus to preserve his name from oblivion, is a clear proof of the same wonderful power of friendship. It is a token of love between them which will be cherished by those who read what Mr. Andrew has written.

When Zaka Ullah was suffering in his last moments the pangs of death, his dear friend, who has written this book, was suffering all the while with him. He could not leave his side, but remained constantly with him, helping to support him in his last moments. Such was his devoted love.

If I were to put my own personal opinion into a brief compass I would wish to express it in this manner. If Musalmans and Christians in India could learn to love one another as these two friends have already done, then the time would soon arrive when the followers of both religions would begin to chant the following lines of the poet:

I should become one with you,  
And you would become one with me:  
I should be the body,  
And you would be the soul.  
Then no one would be able to say  
That I am different from you,  
Or that you are different from me.



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*"Hence it is, that it is almost a definition  
of a gentleman, to say he is one who never  
inflicts pain."*

CARDINAL NEWMAN.

## Preface

NEARLY seventeen years ago I began to write these pages in memory of my old friend, Munshi Zaka Ullah, who had been like a father to me during the earlier period of my life in India, when I was working as a member of the Cambridge University Brotherhood in Delhi.

This closely intimate friendship with Zaka Ullah developed slowly at first, but in the end it became very deeply rooted and grounded in mutual confidence and affection. There was, at the outset, a certain shyness and self-diffidence which I found difficult to overcome. There were language perplexities also which often put me to shame; for our conversation was always carried on in Urdu, and I am a bad linguist. But Munshi Zaka Ullah's wealth of affection was unbounded, and his love for me was so spontaneous that it soon overcame every obstacle. After this it was my greatest happiness to get away from College work and sit with him through the afternoon talking with him and asking him questions.

Everything at this time was new to me in the East, and he could see my genuine delight while our conversation went on from one subject to another. This pleasure of mine kindled his own enthusiasm in turn and made him gladly

reminiscent. In this mood he would talk for hours with me about the days when the Moghul Court was yet in evidence at Delhi and the people of the city loved their old Emperor, Bahadur Shah, and took pride in their historic past.

He would tell me also about his own family history, his ancestors, and his traditions. He would speak to me most of all about his faith in God, and would try to explain to me, in his own simple way, the central teaching of Islam concerning the unity of the divine nature and the compassion for suffering humanity, "which," said he, "is the supreme attribute of God in the Quran and in all the best Islamic thought." I would say to him in answer: "Munshi Sahib, your own life is the best commentary on the Quran that I have ever read and studied."

Some of these conversations will re-appear later on in this volume of reminiscences. What I would chiefly wish to represent is a true picture of Zaka Ullah himself, who personified to me in his old age, as he spoke with such kindness and affection, the ancient courtesy of his own ancestral house and also of the Moghul Court of Delhi, wherein his forefathers had played a distinguished part for many generations as teachers of the royal family.

His face would light up with affection as he narrated his story to me. While he spoke, there was always a tender look in his eyes, which were dim with old age. Every word he uttered carried with it a gentle dignity which was the heritage of a long line of culture and refinement. To be in his presence, while he was speaking, and to watch his singularly expressive face, made the

vision that he himself saw of Old Delhi vividly appear before my own kindled imagination, bringing with it those

“huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,”

which had haunted me when I was a boy. The dream that I used to dream of the East had almost come true in those illuminating days.

Circumstances that were quite unforeseen prevented my finishing the manuscript of these reminiscences which I had already begun in 1912. Though I have taken it up many times since, and also published fragments of it in India in magazines and papers, I have never been able to complete it in the way I wished to give it for final publication.

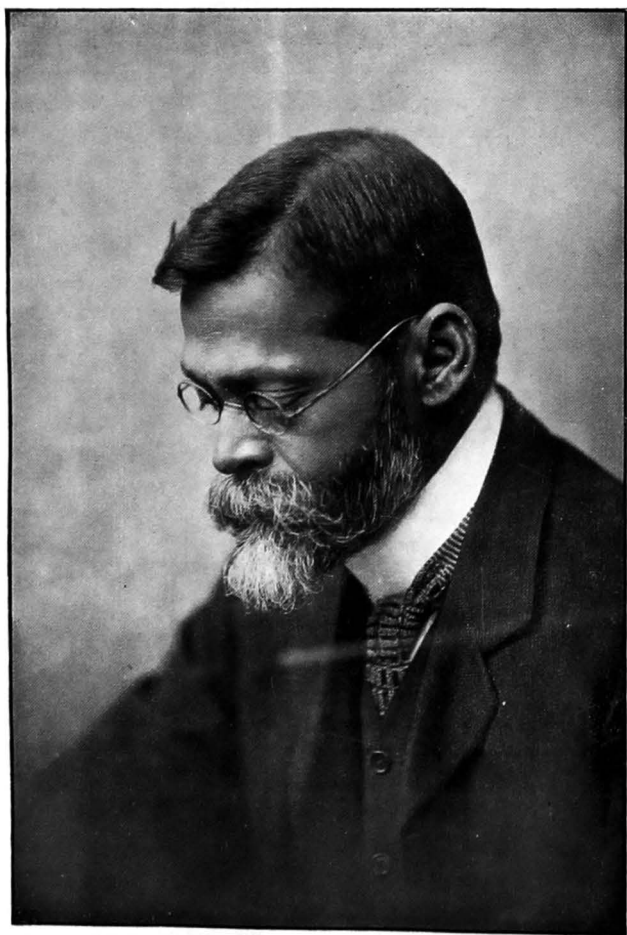
But quite recently, owing to increasing racial and religious friction in India, the need for united effort to be made, which may lead to mutual understanding between East and West, has become very acute. The best people on either side are feeling this most of all. It therefore appeared to me that other things could be made to wait their turn if only I might be able to relieve in one direction at least the growing tension by telling the story of such a noble spirit as that of Zaka Ullah. With this thought in my mind I have used the long interval of a solitary voyage on a French steamer from Colombo to Marseilles in order to get ready the material which had been lying so long unused and thus to begin my task. Here, in my old home at Cambridge, it will not be difficult to bring it to a conclusion.

In the work of collecting details, concerning

Munshi Zaka Ullah, which relate to his family and antecedents, I have been helped most of all by his son, M. Inayat Ullah, who has been untiring in his kindness, patience and devotion. Without his continual aid this book could never have been written at all. His reverence for his father and mother has been most touching to me to witness. Often he has undertaken long journeys to see me, and it was a disappointment to him that what I had already written had remained unpublished so long.

The late Principal S. K. Rudra of St. Stephen's College, Delhi, also gave me the warmest encouragement and assistance while he was still living. He had been the personal friend of Munshi Zaka Ullah, and was himself deeply revered for his goodness by everyone in Delhi,—Musalmans, Hindus and Christians alike. It was from his house that I used to go day by day to visit Zaka Ullah during the months of his last illness. On my return I would tell him some of the conversations we had together, and would discuss still further in detail the difficult points that had been raised. Every day, while I have been completing my task and revising these pages, I have missed his knowledge and assistance. Those tiny inaccuracies, which are almost certain to occur, in spite of half a long lifetime spent in India, would have been at once detected by his keen insight; and I have no one at hand who can equally render me this service.

One other of my intimate friends has died, who helped me in the preparation of this book while I was in Delhi, and remained very dear to me to the end. Hakim Ajmal Khan and his family will often be referred to in these pages. The



PRINCIPAL SUSIL KUMAR RUDRA OF DELHI.

Hakim Sahib himself passed away only a few months ago, after spending a life of sacrifice in the service of the poor. His house and hospital were filled day by day with the sick and dying, and he would minister to them, taking no fees except from the rich who were able to afford them. Many times over I had discussed with him the story that I was going to relate about Zaka Ullah and Old Delhi. In his own courteous and considerate way he used gently to chide me for not getting on with my work and for constantly putting other less important things before it. He died of heart failure at the moment of his highest influence in Indian religious affairs, —just at a time also when his presence as a peacemaker was required by the whole of educated India with an urgency difficult to describe.

The Memoir of Zaka Ullah attached to this book, which was written by Dr. Nazir Ahmad shortly before his death, will itself explain without any further words the debt of gratitude I owe to the author, who was the greatest of all the learned men of Old Delhi, and also from childhood onwards his most intimate personal friend. In translating the Urdu MSS. which he wrote for me, I have ventured to be free in my rendering, having English readers in view. I hope that in this way the spirit of the original has been preserved.

Dr. Nazir Ahmad was dear to me no less than Munshi Zaka Ullah himself; and I can never hope to repay the kindness that I received at his hands. He was the acknowledged master of Urdu prose in his own generation, and my book has been greatly honoured by an inscription from his pen.



Many others,—among them, my own pupils,—have helped me from time to time. I know they will forgive me, if I do not mention them by name. Their service to me in this matter was a service of pure love, which needed no outward recognition; they all know how deeply I reciprocate their affection.

The book, such as it is, has been dedicated to the teachers and students of Santiniketan, where the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, has founded his School of International Fellowship.

It was in London, during 1912, while my thoughts were full of Munshi Zaka Ullah, that I first met Rabindranath Tagore. It has been ever since the highest privilege of my life to have been permitted to work and study under his guidance and inspiration at Santiniketan. The deep love of India which I had learnt and experienced at Delhi has been reinforced and enlarged in Bengal. The heart of India is one. Every day of my life, through nearly a quarter of a century in the East, I have found this to be true.

During all these intervening years,—since the War and after the War,—Rabindranath Tagore's mind has turned more and more in the direction of racial and religious unity as the greatest need of mankind, if peace is to be established on a firm foundation, and if any further danger of internecine war is to be averted.

With this object directly in view, the poet has patiently and diligently sought at Santiniketan to found a House of Goodwill and Friendship, where East and West may meet in mutual regard, and men and women of different races and religions may learn to understand and appreciate

one another's varied points of view in an atmosphere of sincere friendship and goodwill to all mankind.

In a certain very real sense, all that Munshi Zaka Ullah stood for in Old Delhi, both in education and religion, has had its counterpart in Rabindranath Tagore's work at Santiniketan, amid all the outward differences that are immediately apparent. Without any direct link of connexion, Munshi Zaka Ullah's own spirit may be felt there in the poet's ideals as they are being put into practice.

This fact itself came slowly home to me through my own personal experience. Santiniketan has been a revelation to me of that inner unity of the East about which I have already written. It is not without significance that the poet's father, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, found the Persian poems of Hafiz to be one of the greatest means of help in his own religious meditation.

Munshi Zaka Ullah's life and work in one sense belonged to an earlier generation. He was the last relic in Delhi of an age that has now passed away. But in another sense, he was a true prophet of the future. His deepest convictions are bearing fruit in the hearts and minds of men and women of the Indian modern world. Since, therefore, I have good reason to believe that the teachers and students of Santiniketan will best appreciate his ideas and understand his personality, I have ventured, after careful consideration, to dedicate this volume to them. Any profits which may be derived from the sale of this book will be given to Santiniketan.

It may be well, at this point, to explain still

more explicitly some of the main motives which made me wish to write.

There was a personal factor which weighed with me most of all when I began my task. It was my great wish, if it were possible, to do so, to preserve the memory of my old friend. He admitted me, during the last years of his life, to his inner thoughts, and used to prepare beforehand different subjects of peculiar importance, according to his own way of thinking, whereon he wished to speak to me, feeling that he had something to give to the world. It was made abundantly clear to me that he wished his views to be more widely known. He had been disappointed in his own literary career because his many volumes in Urdu had remained very little read; therefore he clung to me, in those last days, with a hope that I might make some compensation for his own disappointment. On many occasions, after an earnest talk together, he would say to me words like these: "I wish that you could write down, in your own way, the things that I have been speaking to you. People will listen to you."

In spite of the lapse of years I still feel his words to be true. His thoughts, uttered before the great dividing line of the World War, have by no means gone out of date. Zaka Ullah, in many respects, is coming to his own to-day.

The second motive that impelled me was the fact that Zaka Ullah was an original educational thinker. He was a pioneer in a difficult age. On the one hand he remained entirely true to his own Eastern culture. He insisted on all education, worth the name, being rooted in the soil of the country wherein it was given; at the

same time, he was one of the leading spirits among the Musalmans,—broad-minded, tolerant, and large-hearted,—who definitely aimed at the assimilation of all that was best in the culture of the West. His convictions, therefore, on the subject of Indian education, while he attempted to harmonise these two different points of view, are of more than passing interest.

In the third place, Zaka Ullah, while he lived, wielded a great influence in the North of India on account of his sympathy and tolerance towards those of another faith. The Hindus of the city of Delhi loved him no less than the Musalmans. Since there is no more serious question before the people of India at the present time than the improvement of religious relations between Musalmans and Hindus and the restoration of that kindly feeling which once undoubtedly existed, anything which can help in any degree to restore that relationship is surely of value. While resolutions passed at conferences may do something to relieve the strain, it is generally felt that the lives of those individuals whose daily conduct makes for peace and charity in human intercourse can do much more. Zaka Ullah was regarded on all sides as pre-eminently such a person.

I would emphasise the fact which will be apparent in the book itself, that it was from the standpoint of deeply religious Musalmans that I learnt to love these loveable characters in Old Delhi, and it was through them most of all that I learnt to appreciate Islam during my first years in India. I hope, therefore, to make abundantly evident the nobility and simplicity of Islam as Zaka Ullah practised it in his life.

For he followed to its utmost limit the fundamental precept which underlies the Ninety-third Surah of the Quran.

By the Splendour of the Morning Light,  
And by the Stillness of the Night.

The Lord hath not forsaken thee,  
Nor followed thee with hate.  
Thy future shall far better be  
Than is thy present state.  
The Lord shall give thee verily  
Blessings and comforts great.

Did He not find thee fatherless,  
And give thee shelter meet,  
And see thee from His way transgress,  
And guide thine erring feet,  
And grant thee,—poor and in distress,—  
Thy daily bread to eat?

Then take the orphan for thy ward,  
God's goodness to repay.  
To him that asks, thine alms accord,  
And chide him not away.  
As for the bounty of thy Lord,  
Tell of it day by day.

This fine version by Mr. T. C. Lewis, which can only dimly represent the majestic beauty of the original Arabic, may serve to make clear to readers in the West something of the practical character of Islam.

I have watched, as an intimate friend of the household and a welcome guest, Zaka Ullah's gentle courtesy to all his friends, and his devotion and goodness to every member of his family. This embraced within its bounty his personal servant, who was touchingly devoted to him; the humble widow woman who used to pull his

punkah during the hot weather; the poor and afflicted who used to come daily to his door for alms, and all sorts and conditions of men, who would seek his comfort, help and support. All belonged to his own family as he belonged to God. These acts of kindness and piety were done in the true spirit of Islam, without any distinction of race, caste or creed. To each and all, in humble thankfulness to God for His great mercies, he was ready at all times to stretch out a helping hand as far as lay in his power.

Side by side with this love for all mankind he was a devoted lover of his own country. India was the land of his birth, and he was Indian through and through in every fibre of his being. It is true that his family had come originally from beyond the Hindu Kush; but India was the birthplace of his parents, the home of his spiritual adoption, and the home of his love. He was inspired with ever fresh enthusiasm as he read each page of its history; and the study of India's ancient past was one of the delights of his life, both as a scholar and a patriot.

Not seldom, despondent voices are heard to-day declaring that India can never become one nation. Munshi Zaka Ullah, living in Delhi, knew better than most people what an amount of bigotry, superstition, and ignorance had to be overcome before unity could be established. Therefore, his confidence in the future of his country was no easy-going optimism. But he had a profound, mystical faith, that Almighty God had fore-ordained and predetermined that Hindus and Musalmans should settle down side by side at last in mutual tolerance and affection.

This was his own ideal, and it coloured all his

actions. In that faith he lived, and in that faith he died.

It is a very great pleasure to me to thank my two old friends, Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee and Mr. E. W. Heffer, for helping and encouraging me in different ways to publish these Memoirs. Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee first published them in India in the *Modern Review*, from whence they have been translated into different Indian vernaculars. Mr. Heffer, whom I first met at Cambridge nearly forty years ago, has now completed their publication in book form in England. To both of them I owe my sincere thanks. I would also thank the publisher, Mr. John Murray, for allowing me to use the photograph of Delhi City near the Jama Masjid from one of his publications. The literary editor of the *Student Christian Movement* has kindly allowed three portraits from an earlier book of mine to be reproduced, and Sir Thomas Arnold has generously given me the use of a very important photograph of the leaders of the Aligarh Movement and Urdu literary revival in North India.

C. F. ANDREWS.

## CHAPTER I

### OLD DELHI

FROM conversations with those whose lives stretched back far into last century I have tried to gather together some impressions of the condition of Old Delhi before the Moghul Court had entirely passed away. There are still a very few whose memories go back to those earliest days; but the leaders have passed away, and the living records are rapidly being lost. When I first reached Delhi, nearly twenty-five years ago, there were distinguished citizens, who in their old age could actually describe the royal court itself. I have constantly spoken with them, but they are now gone.

Munshi Zaka Ullah and Maulvi Nazir Ahmad were two of the oldest and most respected residents of Delhi at the time when I arrived there as a new-comer to India in March, 1904. My acquaintance with them, which ripened into friendship, went back to that very year. During the eight years that followed I was constantly in their company, sharing their affection. Their deaths—each at the age of nearly ninety—rapidly succeeded one another in the years 1911-12. After 1913, my own home was changed to Bengal, where I have been working in the school of Rabindranath Tagore ever since, with only occasional visits to my old home in Delhi.

Chiefly because of the friendship of these two old residents of Delhi, who knew its traditions and



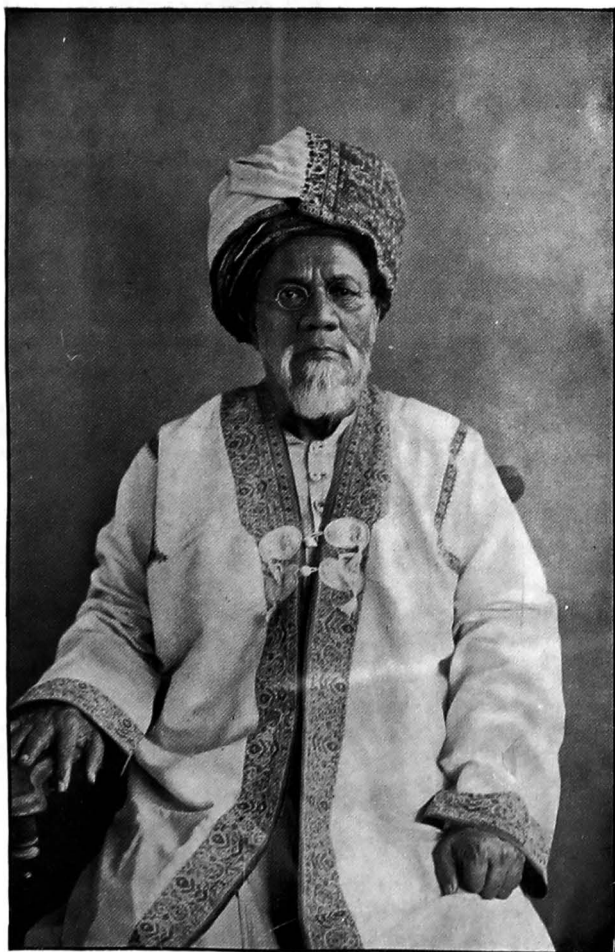
## 2        ZAKA ULLAH OF DELHI

had lived in the Moghul times, the city with its ancient memories and its glorious architecture has remained always for me my first ideal vision of India and my first love. Nothing can take its place in the romance of Indian life.

Delhi itself has changed, since 1913, out of all recognition; and now a new city has arisen, called New Delhi. But what always abides with me as a lasting treasure is the fragrant recollection of those earlier by-gone years. For the graciousness and dignity of the Moghul Age, with its culture and refinement, were made visible to me in my two Musalman friends. Their memory returns, whenever I pass by the Jama Masjid and the Delhi Gate, where Munshi Zaka Ullah lived, close to the highway which leads to Nizamuddin's and Humayun's tombs; or else when I pass on the other side of Delhi, within the city walls, close by the Fatehpuri Masjid, where Maulvi Nazir Ahmad used to reside. Delhi will always remain Old Delhi to me on account of the vivid recollection of these two noble old men. New Delhi is difficult to understand and to assimilate with such a background of the ancient city in my mind.

There were other leading men of Old Delhi among the small group of intellectual companions who met together and shared the genial atmosphere of literary distinction of those earlier days, but I have a very faint picture of them in my mind. I can remember by name Rai Piyare Lal, who helped me in gathering the information I have put down below, but his face is not clear to me to-day; the same is true of M. Karam Ullah Khan.

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DR. NAZIR AHMAD OF DELHI.

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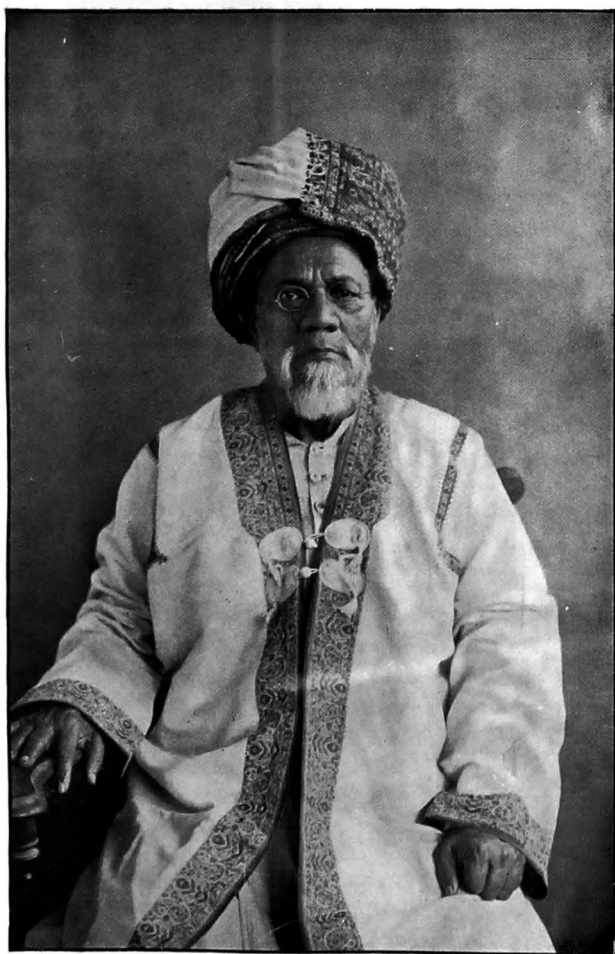
## 2 ZAKA ULLAH OF DELHI

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DR. NAZIR AHMAD OF DELHI.

courtesy of speech and dignity of manner, was the good physician, Hakim Ajmal Khan, to whom I have already referred. He also has passed away. At the present time there is no longer, I believe, a single leading citizen of those early times who is left alive. Even their memory is rapidly vanishing from the earth. It is a precious thing to me to have been able to obtain at first hand, just before the end, a vivid picture of the past. I must try to write it down as it was told me by lips that are now dead.

In gathering together the material for these chapters on Old Delhi which follow, I have not gone to any printed records; and certain descriptions that I have put down may need some verification. What I have done is to relate just those things which were told me in conversation by those who were living in old pre-Mutiny times. Some of these were my own personal friends, and others were introduced to me by my own pupils who helped me in my search for facts. In certain details it is quite possible that their own recollections may be at fault, or my representation may be imperfect; but at least the record which I shall give will have the colour and vivid character of personal eye witness.

Old Delhi was strangely different from what it is now; that is the first thing to grasp in dealing with the past. In spite of so much magnificent architecture that remains, the appearance of Old Delhi was nothing like the modern city we see to-day. The city itself was almost strictly confined within the walls, which were then intact. The city gates were shut each night and opened again every morning. By

#### 4 ZAKA ULLAH OF DELHI

far the greater number of people lived within the walls of the city. They rarely went outside, except either to visit the tomb of some saint, or to go on a long distant journey. There were only a few houses outside the Kashmere Gate, and none at all outside the Delhi Gate, where the ruins of the seven cities of Delhi covered the ground. There was no permanent bridge across the River Jumna.

The roads outside the city, leading from the different gates, could hardly be called highways. They were for the most part mere country tracks. Only the ruins of the past remained outside along these roads, and there was a thick jungle along the bed of the river.

Inside the city itself the people were crowded together; for Delhi was very prosperous during those peaceful years after the British occupation. Where the present railway station stands with its network of railway lines, was in those early days one of the most thickly populated parts of Old Delhi. Furthermore (and here the change of the picture was greatest of all), the large wide open space between the Jama Masjid and the Fort, which is now kept without any buildings at all for strictly military purposes, was at that time filled with houses of the middle class inhabitants of the city, and used as a residential quarter. There were also houses there which belonged to the nobility of the Moghul Court; this Court was held near at hand in the Fort.

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, between 1830 and 1850, when the "English Peace," as it was commonly called, was firmly established, there was great abundance within the city, and people began for the first



time for want of room, and because of the peaceful conditions, to live in small numbers outside the city walls. The common people were much helped and encouraged by the general cheapness of articles of food. For a long time the prices remained extremely low, since Delhi was the centre of a very large and fertile agricultural area. The rate of wheat was about forty seers to the rupee, and that of ghee (or clarified butter) four seers to the rupee—a "seer" being reckoned at about two pounds avoirdupois. Such figures as these were given me from two or three sources; they represent an almost incredible cheapness as compared with similar prices in modern times. Articles of clothing were practically all made of homespun cotton cloth; wool was very rarely used. The padded cotton quilt was worn in the cold weather in order to keep out the winter cold. Anything that came up country from Calcutta was usually brought by boat to Agra and thence on a pack-saddle, and therefore was very expensive. But every handicraft in Old Delhi was kept fully employed, and a good price was obtained for durable hand-made goods.

The majority of the residents led a comfortable and easy-going existence owing to the general level of prosperity within the city and the peace which had been newly established. The years were leisurely spent. Festivals were common, and they were kept with great pomp and ceremonial. Processions through the city were almost daily occurrences during the marriage season, and immense sums of money were spent in wedding festivities and decorations. The daily intercourse and intermingling of the citizens in the streets were full of colour, variety

## 6 ZAKA ULLAH OF DELHI

and charm. Bright-coloured clothes were the fashion, and the nobles especially rivalled one another in their splendid costumes. The markets contained very few foreign goods; the country-made goods were fine in quality and not expensive. They were also remarkable for their rich dyes. The horses, on which the nobles rode through the streets of the city, had gorgeous trappings, and there were frequent cavalcades with tinkling bells and costly equipage. "You might have thought it rather tawdry," said one of my informants, "but we, who were boys at the time, can never forget its magnificence. We used to walk along by the side of the horses and join in these processions."

Another informant told me that outside the city there was only one good high-road. This was kept in repair and was much frequented by carriages in the evening during the twilight hour after the sun had gone down. Inside the city, the ordinary roads and by-lanes were full of holes. They regularly became a mass of mud during each rainy season, and the people used to get along the sides close to the shop-fronts on stones which stood out above the mud. But the Delhi people did not notice much inconvenience, because they had been used to it all through their lives, and the rainy season did not last very long. The dust in the dry weather was more trying than the rain.

The nobles of the city, who were attached to the royal court, kept stately bullock carriages, richly caparisoned, in which they went from place to place accompanied by much jolting. Sometimes one wheel of the carriage would come off, owing to the roughness of the road,

and the whole traffic would be blocked. Down the middle of the central thoroughfare of Delhi—the world-famous Chandni Chowk—ran a canal, and shady trees grew on both sides. There was a universal opinion among those whom I questioned, that the Chandni Chowk had been spoilt by the modern “improvements” that had widened the road, but covered over in doing so the water of the canal. The huge clock-tower in the centre was equally disliked. “You cannot even imagine,” said one old resident to me, “how stately the Chandni Chowk looked in the old days. It was the centre of the city, filled with country ware and country produce. It was very bright with colour, because many awnings were put up in order to keep off the glare of the sun. All day long, except in the early afternoon in summer, when people retired to rest, it was crowded with those who were going shopping, or wanted to have a talk with their neighbours. They wore bright colours, and this added to the liveliness of the scene. Now, everyone looks dull, and there is no variety of colours. The beauty of the old Chandni Chowk is gone, never to return.”

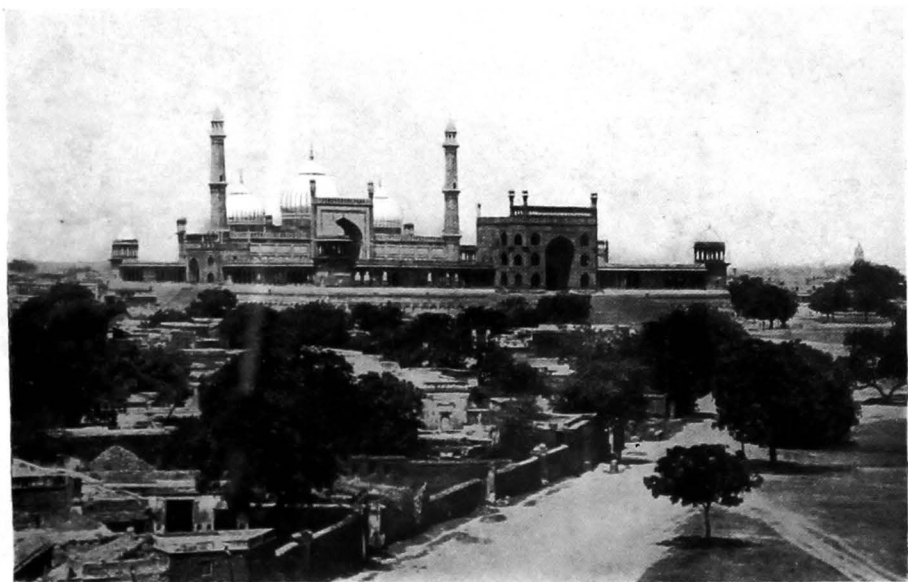
The gardens of the city, which are numerous, were for the most part closed to the public. They are now thrown open, and the great open space in front of the Fort affords a breathing space to the congested city. Undoubtedly there has been great improvement in this direction as well as in the formation of new roads within the city itself; but much yet remains to be accomplished.

Some of these ancient Moghul gardens were used privately by the ladies of the Royal Court,

and still bear the names of queens and princesses, such as the famous Roshanara Bagh. I was told that the Moghul Emperors were the first to introduce into North India these gardens, with running water and roses and avenues of cypresses and other trees, which give a dream-like beauty. Such gardens represented to them, amid the heat of Delhi, something of the coolness of the air of Central Asia which they had left behind. The rose especially was a favourite flower, because it reminded them of Hafiz and the Persian poets who often use it as a symbol in their own poems.

The water supply within the city during the earlier part of the nineteenth century was very inferior. There were not many public wells, and the water taken from them was supposed to produce a very painful kind of skin eruption for which Delhi had become notorious. Certainly the benefit of pure water, filtered from the river Jumna, has been one of the causes why this trying complaint has practically vanished. Personally I can well remember the time when it was a serious danger, only second to malaria. When I asked about the latter disease I was told that it had always been prevalent in the late autumn, but the most serious epidemics had occurred in later times after the Mutiny, when the jungle in the bed of the River Jumna grew very rank and was not cut down. Fortunately this debilitating disease, on account of better drainage, has been almost brought under control in the modern city.

In the hot weather the poor people of Delhi used to suffer much from shortage of drinking water. Further supplies, in addition to the



THE JAMA MASJID.

well water, used to be brought up in skins from the Jumna and sold in the streets. The great river, at that time, ran much nearer to the high wall of the Palace within the Fort. It has considerably shifted its course during the last hundred years.

The finest sight in the streets, which was in a certain sense the pride of the inhabitants of Delhi in those by-gone days, was to watch the royal elephants, covered with cloth of gold, with huge gilded howdahs on their backs, as they were led in a stately, slow procession through the streets. The Chandni Chowk would be thronged with spectators on these rare occasions. These State elephants were especially attractive to the young. It is interesting to note that among the reminiscences of Old Delhi, these elephant processions on State occasions occupied a prominent place. Those who related the story to me were themselves young children in those early days, and the gorgeousness of the scene had evidently impressed their young imaginations. Not far from the Jama Masjid was an immense well, called the "Well of the Elephants." Here the royal elephants used to be brought, each morning and evening, without their gorgeous trappings, in order to be bathed and to be given water. The children would watch them with never-ending excitement.

When I asked the question, whether life on the whole was happier in those days than in later times, the answer was almost invariably "Yes." This was to be expected from elderly people, who are prone to idealise the past. The truth is probably this, that the relief and prosperity which came after the British occupation, at the

beginning of the nineteenth century, were so great, that they counter-balanced all minor discomforts. It must be remembered that Delhi, in those early days, had singularly little touch with the outside world. The impact from the West had a novelty of its own which I shall afterwards describe; it led to a cultural renaissance which proceeded remarkably from within. There was no universal discontent owing to the setting up of new standards of living, and also no raising of prices. The prosperity was real: it was not fictitious. Food remained cheap, while money grew more plentiful.

Furthermore, I could realise, in the accounts which I received, the interest which the more varied pageantry of life created in those earlier days. In a land of brilliant sunshine, nature herself calls for the bright colours that attract and charm the eyes. These things are needed by the average man and woman as much as food and water. For there is a hunger and thirst of the imagination in the East which craves for a natural satisfaction. I think it is Mr. Meredith Townsend who points out, in his book *Europe and Asia*, that the drabness of the civilisation which has been transferred to the tropics from the grey North accounts for much of its lack of acclimatisation in a country like India. These processions of the royal elephants on festival occasions through the Chandni Chowk, while all the world looked on, arrayed in many-coloured dresses, were not merely State functions connected with religion; they were social occasions of joy and gladness, of laughter and merriment, which broke the monotony of long days of toil at handicrafts and of hard labour in

the fields; they gave a zest to life which had immense social significance; they also made human existence wholesome and sweet.

One further fact deserves mentioning which is full of importance to-day. In Delhi city itself, the two communities, the Hindu and Musalman, had come to live peaceably side by side under the wise guidance of the Moghul emperors, who had learnt to trust the Hindus, and were trusted by them in return. Those of my informants who were Hindus among the old inhabitants of Delhi, told me without any reserve when I approached them for information, that their community was well treated under the last Moghuls and had no cause to complain. This general contentment of these later times had been a growth of centuries; and the Moghul emperors, in spite of much that can be said against them on other grounds, deserve credit for the manner in which they had overcome within themselves religious bigotry and prejudice, and on that account were able to treat their Hindu subjects with kindly consideration and a measure of impartial justice. They were also able to impress the same regard for the feelings of the Hindus upon the Musalman nobles of the Royal Court. Even if at times there were outbreaks of mob violence among the ignorant and illiterate masses over some insult to religion, these quarrels never reached beyond that substratum of society, and the animosity created was easily allayed. The Moghuls knew how to make peace.

Human intercourse was not hurried in those days. Men loved to stop and converse with one another in the narrow streets. Seated by the side of the shops or in some portico, they would



## 12. ZAKA ULLAH OF DELHI

meet each evening when the sun went down. Life was lived in the open air, and there was a very large leisured class.

Yet the poor were not sunk too deep in their poverty to lose the joy of life. Food and work were both plentiful, and there was no unemployment. The wheels of the active world of events did not go round too fast for average men and women to gain some pleasure out of human existence. They could enjoy life's panorama. Even though literary education among the masses was backward, there was a culture always present imbibed from religion. High traditions of the past were kept alive in every home by the stories of religion which mothers taught their children. An urbanity existed from close daily contact and kindly feeling which the modern rush and hurry have swept aside. Its marks may still be seen in the refined faces of the Delhi people who are the direct descendants of this old Moghul civilisation.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MOGHUL COURT

At the time when Munshi Zaka Ullah, the subject of this memoir, was a little child, the Moghul Emperor, Bahadur Shah, was already an aged monarch nearing his dotage. This emperor could trace his lineage directly back to the House of Timur. His ancestors were Baber and Humayun, Akbar and Shah Jehan. He was the last of one of the most distinguished lines of kings that have ever ruled upon the earth.

In spite of his physical weakness and mental incompetence, Bahadur Shah was highly respected by the easy-going inhabitants of the royal city of Delhi. One of the survivors, who had actually seen him in his Court, told me that he was dearly loved by Hindus and Musalmans alike for his "good manners." His very foibles and incompetences as a monarch were a part of his attraction for the multitude. He was very peaceful and unwarlike. His subjects would smile at his simplicity. They knew well how ineffective he was, but they loved him all the same.

Bahadur Shah was tolerably skilled in those fine arts for which the ancient city of Delhi was famous. The four chief of these were music, manuscript illumination, miniature painting on ivory, and poetry. The Royal Court was their patron.

The last of these, poetry, was the one absorbing fascination for the high-born nobles, who formed a literary coterie round the emperor and joined in his artistic pursuits. They vied with one another in their verses on every public occasion. Contests were held; the most highly-praised poems were recited; prizes were awarded. The whole city was interested in these recitals to an extraordinary extent, and the fame of the prize-winners went abroad. Most of the nobles of the imperial court took part in these poetic contests. Each of them had his own literary title by which he was famous. The Emperor himself would often take part; for he prided himself more on being a poet than on being a king.

Meanwhile, however, in other directions, the affairs of the administration, as far as they remained within the Emperor's power, went from bad to worse. The Emperor himself became the prey of greedy courtiers and sycophants, who used to flatter him and praise in extravagant terms his musical and poetic skill in order to obtain his bounty. In this way large sums of money were extracted from him, which ought to have been used for purposes of State. The royal princes had their own way in state affairs. They quarrelled among themselves while the old Emperor sank down into senility and dotage. The whole picture of these times, outlined for my information by those who in their younger days had actually been present within the Palace, was not unlike the portrait drawn by Sir Walter Scott in his novel, *Anne of Geierstein*, of the old dotard King René and his corrupt Court.

The favourite outdoor sport among the nobles,



OLD FORT, DELHI.

within the Fort, was cock-fighting. Immense sums of money would be won or lost in gambling upon the issue of a single cock fight. Such a decadent sport as this revealed a decadent age.

The intimate residence together side by side in the same city of Musalmans and Hindus had brought about a noticeable amalgamation of customs and usages among the common people. In Delhi—unlike further North in the central Punjab and on the Frontier—the Hindus had never been unequally matched in numbers with the Musalmans. The Hindu influence had told especially in commerce. The Musalmans had taken up the administration. Official posts were filled chiefly by them, with the exception of the revenue department. I have had more convincing and corroborative evidence about this especially friendly relationship between Hindus and Musalmans in old Delhi than I have had concerning any other factor. The information has come to me from both sides, and has been practically the same. It was evidently a feature of the city of which the inhabitants themselves were proud. These older residents whom I approached, whether Hindu or Musalman, spoke of this fact with enthusiasm, and contrasted it with the bitterness of modern times.

It was quite common, for instance, in those days, for the two communities to join together in different religious festivals. Hindus would go to a Muslim festival, and Musalmans would go to a Hindu festival. This had become a natural local custom, and none but the zealots and puritans on either side raised any objection to such friendly proceedings.

The Musalmans had great respect for certain

Hindu ascetics. There are famous Moghul paintings representing the Emperor and his Court visiting some such holy man. The Hindus, on their side, regularly flocked to pray for temporal benefits to the tomb of a celebrated Muhammadan saint, whose grave was near the city. The tomb of Nizamuddin, outside the Delhi Gate, was also visited on special occasions by Hindus in order to obtain a blessing.

Again, it was the custom of Hindu writers, who became famous in Urdu literature, and prided themselves on their knowledge of Persian, to preface their literary compositions with the sacred word, Bismillah ("In the Name of God"), as an invocation, before they began to write. Hindu children went in large numbers to the schools attached to the mosques; there they learnt both Arabic and Persian. The Persian language was especially dear to them as the language of poetry, and the Persian tradition still remains very strong in many of the leading Hindu households in Delhi. Hindus would quote Hafiz and the other Persian poets both in their own Urdu writings and in their conversation. It was probably through this medium of the Persian language that the Hindus in Delhi became attracted to the Sufi doctrines in Islam, which were closely related to their own Vedanta texts in spiritual ideals.

On Hindu feast days the children of Hindu households would always bring their offerings of food to their teachers in the mosque schools. They would invite their teachers to their families to share in their festivities, and such invitations were regularly accepted. Musalmans, on their side, spoke of the Hindu religious festivals with

great courtesies and respect, and were very particular to avoid any offence against Hindu customs. At their social functions, such as marriages and the like, presents were invariably sent to Hindu friends, and they were asked to grace the wedding by their company. They would come to pay their respects to the bride and bridegroom and offer their presents in return. On occasions of general rejoicing, such as the conclusion of the great Fast of Ramazan every year,<sup>1</sup> congratulations would be sent by Hindus to their Musalman friends, and these would be graciously acknowledged. The art of living peaceably with neighbours of a different religion had reached a very high level.

The old Emperor, Bahadur Shah, was most punctilious in these matters right up to the end of his life. He would pass in procession with his royal elephants, decked in their cloth of gold, and would take his seat afterwards at a special tower in the Fort, from which he could watch the crowd beneath at the chief Hindu festivals as well as at Musalman feasts. The crowds would recognise him and make their obeisance, and thus much goodwill would be created. The Emperor, on these occasions, would give public recitations of his own verses and the people would loudly applaud.

The Mirzas, or royal princes, delighted to ride on magnificently caparisoned horses through the streets of the city at such festival times, when the Delhi populace were on holiday together. In this way they often courted special favour from the multitude for their particular faction. The rivalries between the Mirzas became the talk of the city, and this added some excitement to an

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

otherwise rather indolent existence. The Emperor was unable to stop these factions, because the princes themselves were headstrong and unruly.

There were two very famous poets at the Moghul Court of Bahadur Shah who were great rivals. Such a rivalry became an event of first-rate importance in this puppet kingdom; their literary names were Galib and Zauq. The latter at length gained the ear of Bahadur Shah. If palace gossip is to be believed, he defeated his rival by the simple method of composing many of the Emperor's best verses for him which were published under the Emperor's name.

Bahadur Shah chose for his own literary title the name Zafar. The old and young people in Delhi used to sing the Urdu and Persian couplets of the Emperor about the streets. Indeed the flattery of the old king that was openly carried on was immense. His enjoyment of it all was so innocent and sincere that no harm was done. It served to make a holiday amusement for the people.

In many other respects the Moghul Court was entirely effete. Decay had long ago set in, and each generation saw the forces of decadence still further gaining the mastery. More than one opportunity had been given of recovery, when invaders had entered the Punjab and the people were ready to rally in defence of their country behind their sovereign; but on each occasion the weakness at the centre became further evident, and the Moghul power collapsed.

Munshi Zaka Ullah, in his old age, during the numerous talks we had together concerning Old Delhi, never waxed enthusiastic about the



Moghul Court of Bahadur Shah and the conditions which existed in Old Delhi. He was in many ways, as old people naturally tend to be, a lover of the past. This made his faint praise of the Moghul reign all the more significant.

"I knew Old Delhi," he said to me one day in conversation, "I also knew well the Royal Palace; for I went there as a boy. I know what happened there better, perhaps, than anyone who is alive to-day. For almost everyone is now dead who could remember it, as I could, by personal experience of what it meant. All I can say about it is this, that the present with all its glaring faults is better than that which I knew when I was a boy. People speak of the 'good old times'; but those times, as a whole, were not good, when they are compared with the days in which we are now living. They were full of corruption and decay."

In the first edition of his *History of India*, Zaka Ullah had written in Urdu about the Court of the Moghul Emperor, Bahadur Shah, in harsh terms, for which he afterwards expressed personal regret. He used to say that he could never meet any member of the ancient household of the Emperor, after its publication, without feeling a pang of remorse for what he had written. His justification was that he was obliged to write thus as an historian; and the science of history will not allow any favour to be shown to anyone, but only the truth to be expressed.

His devoted loyalty to the Emperor's person, however, was noticeable throughout his long life, and many evidences of this will be brought forward in the story which follows. Out of this intense reverence for Bahadur Shah, even in

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his downfall, he received as a guest at a later date, when the Moghul house was in ruins, the daughter of Mirza Baber, the brother of the Emperor. She had already reached old age when he welcomed her with reverence into his own household for protection, giving her the apartments that his own mother had occupied, and treating her as a royal guest. Whenever he undertook any journey or began some fresh undertaking, the first thing he did was to make obeisance to this Moghul Princess and ask for her benediction. She would give him her blessing and treat him almost as her own son. She lived with Zaka Ullah's family, occupying a position there of deepest veneration and homage until the day of her death.

This slight picture, which I received at first hand from Zaka Ullah's own lips of his devoted reverence towards the family of the Emperor, Bahadur Shah, appears to me to give a gleam of insight into the deep loyalties of the past which were bestowed upon the royal house. It shows what sovereignty meant to these generous-hearted men even in the hour of decline.

It is a strange and moving contrast when we come to place side by side Old Delhi before the Mutiny and New Delhi in its sudden rise to power. The Imperial Court had its aged dotard king, its recalcitrant princes, its nobles and its Court ceremonies. The decaying splendour of the palace, with its literary after-glow of poetry and art, illuminated for one brief moment the ruined past before the end came in utter overthrow. Modern Delhi has now begun to be built in its turn—the last of many cities on the same site, which have one by one crumbled into

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dust. The extravagant scale on which it has been planned hitherto makes one shake the head and wonder if its destiny is yet at all secure.

As we look back upon the past, which is so rapidly vanishing before our eyes and fading away from the living memory of mankind, we can hardly refrain from thinking of another empire and another city. There comes to the memory the parallel splendour and magnificence of ancient Venice in her decline from power. The words of one of the greatest of Wordsworth's sonnets rise spontaneously to the mind, and their beauty will bear repetition.

“And what if she had seen those glories fade,  
Those titles vanish and that strength decay;  
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid  
When her long life hath reached its final day:  
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade  
Of that, which once was great, is passed away.”

## CHAPTER III

### THE ENGLISH PEACE

MENTION has already been made, in the Introduction, of a period before the Mutiny of 1857, which was called, in common everyday talk, by the Hindu and Musalman inhabitants of Delhi, the "English Peace." It is necessary, in order to explain adequately the life and ideas of Munshi Zaka Ullah and the great men of his time, to give some sketch, however brief, of the history of Delhi, the capital of the Moghul Empire, during the years that preceded his birth. I shall not enter into details, but only give a general outline of the story which may be studied further in any History of India.

No city had suffered more than Delhi during the great anarchy which swept over India in the eighteenth century, when the rule of the great Moghuls lost its grip upon the provinces and became an empire only in name; a shadow of its past greatness; a byword for weakness rather than for strength; a memory rather than a living reality.

Since Delhi, as the capital of the Moghul Emperors, had received wealth and riches for as long a time as those Emperors had remained strong—exacting their large tribute from provinces as far off as Bengal—it became inevitably weak and helpless when those same Emperors lost their power and became puppets on the throne instead of mighty monarchs. To state these same facts of history in another way—

starting from an economic basis—the wealth and prosperity of Delhi under the great Moghuls had been really, all the time, parasitic and artificial. Delhi itself had become rich because the provinces had been partly drained of their riches for Delhi's sake.

So long as settled government continued undisturbed in those lower provinces, the price in tribute of gold that had to be paid for this outward security may not have been greatly felt as a burden. For the early rule of Akbar and his successors represented for the first time, over a long period, a well-ordered administration, established out of harsh conditions of misrule bordering on chaos. For the earlier Muhammadan kingdoms, which had preceded the Moghul Empire, had left tracks of bloodshed and confusion deeply engraven on Indian soil.

But when, in the end, the Moghul rule itself became chaotic, the first effect was seen in the refusal on the part of the provinces to pay further tribute to an imperial centre like Delhi, which did not function any longer as a bringer of peace and security. During the early part of the eighteenth century one province after another endeavoured to throw off the yoke of subjection; and in the West the Maratha power increased its aggressive onslaughts.

Thus Delhi rapidly lost its own earlier adventurous advantage, which made it the magnificent capital of an all-embracing empire, and became instead the easy prey of every warring faction. The story of the later eighteenth century is one long record of decay, during which those moral forces of humanity that make life sweet and wholesome had been continually submerged and

overwhelmed by the forces of rapine and plunder; of conspiracy and intrigue; of assassination and tyrannical power. The proverb remains true for all decaying cities and outworn civilisations: "Wheresoever the carcase is, there shall the vultures be gathered together." Delhi, in its decline and fall, after the long peaceful reign of the Great Moghuls, had followed the course of Babylon and Tyre, of Jerusalem and Rome.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century the Maratha dominion from the South-west, had reached forward as far as Delhi, the capital of the Moghul empire; but its hold upon the city and its environment was short-lived. In the year 1803 Sindhia was defeated by Wellesley at the battle of Assaye. This victory, shaking the Maratha supremacy with a quivering earthquake shock, which ran from one end of India to the other, brought with it, as one of its direct consequences, the British occupation of Delhi city, while the Moghul Emperor remained in undisturbed possession of the Fort. From that time forward Delhi settled down to a long period of peace such as that ancient and imperial city had not experienced for over a hundred years.

Among the older inhabitants of Delhi whom I approached for information there was a universal agreement that the brief Maratha rule had been oppressive, and that the people of Delhi and its neighbourhood had suffered grievously from looting and pillage both within and without the city while it had lasted. There were old men among my informants who could give a record of the personal recollections of these things within their own families. They could refer

to those who had been alive, when they were young, and had handed down to them this tradition. It tallies with the historical information which has been obtained in other parts of the north of India and from other witnesses. One point that was emphasised was this, that outside the city itself the outrages committed by the bands of Maratha freebooters were worse than those that occurred within the city walls, though the city itself was also unsafe. It was dangerous to travel about, and those who were at all timid never went outside the gates. This naturally raised the price of commodities, because the life of the common people beyond the boundaries of the city was continually disturbed, and food from outside could not get in.

When the British troops took possession of the city without a struggle, leaving the Emperor in full, sovereign, independent command within the area of the Fort, the general sympathy of the Delhi people was with them. They were specially pleased with the forbearance exercised by the newcomers. Nevertheless, through every vicissitude of fortune, whether under the Maratha rule or under the English, the Delhi people—Hindus and Musalmans alike—clung with faithful loyalty to their Moghul Emperors. On this point, again, the evidence that I received was conclusive. Their affection for Bahadur Shah was unchanged, however much they might deplore the weakness and corruption of his administration.

For these Emperors were in no sense ordinary despots, ruling with arbitrary power. They had a genius for finding out and appreciating what the people, over whom they ruled, required. Their chief virtue lay in a noble tradition of

tolerance, especially towards their Hindu subjects. The Hindus, within their empire, loyally served them, and rarely revolted in any province where the Moghul dominion had been long established. The emperors, in their turn, were on the whole generous. Very little distinction was made on grounds of race or religion. Their chief fault lay in the inherent moral weakness of their personal administration, which at times almost reached imbecility. Indeed, it is hardly possible, towards the end, to call it by less harsh a name. The corruption, which they allowed to go on under their own eyes, brought its own inevitable retribution, and at last they succumbed without a blow to every form of more efficiently organised power, as soon as ever it appeared.

The people of Delhi—it was generally agreed among those whom I consulted—would undoubtedly have preferred their own traditional Moghul rulers to the English, if only the Emperors had been strong enough in moral purpose to protect their city from violence and plunder. But as events finally shaped themselves, the residents of the city, during the earlier part of the nineteenth century, were not discontented. They were especially pleased that the semblance of power was still left in the hands of the Moghul Emperors. This proved to be a sound act of statesmanship which brought with it its own reward.

Bahadur Shah was allowed to go on indulging in his poetry, in his religious festivals, and even in his expensive amusements, so long as he showed no sign of resistance, or self-determination, in the wider sphere outside the Fort. But the real power passed more and more, every year, into



the hands of the English, who were able to protect the city from the fiercest external enemies and also administer justice within the city gates. Since the English were, throughout this whole period, very few in numbers, and because they did not interfere more than they could possibly help with administrative matters, the dual control was not altogether disturbing. It did not change too suddenly either local customs or conservative habits of living.

This was most noticeable with regard to the royal family itself. The Fort, along with the palace, remained entirely free from the British jurisdiction and control. The etiquette of complete sovereignty was kept unimpaired. The Fort was looked upon as a separate enclave. A large settled income was established, from which the Emperor was able to draw freely for his own personal use. With lavish generosity, he was able to distribute thirty or forty thousand rupees, in largesse, on each religious festival; but his pension was gradually reduced. The old traditional respect was shown to him, and to the princes also, whenever they appeared in public or entered the city. People riding on horseback at once dismounted and saluted.

If the princes of the royal house had only been as peaceable and kindly as Bahadur Shah himself, the dual arrangement of divided administration might have worked better than it did. But the greatest trouble always came from them. They were turbulent and violent-tempered, incessantly quarrelling among themselves, and stirring up factions both in the palace and in the city. They impoverished themselves by spending money lavishly on their own parties and in

endeavouring to crush their opponents. More than any other single cause, I was told, they brought about the final ruin of the House of Timur.

Once upon a time the Emperor Bahadur Shah fell ill, and appeared to be on the point of death. Fearing lest, immediately after the Emperor's death, there might be a fratricidal quarrel among the princes in order to get possession of the throne, the British administrator posted a regiment of soldiers at the entrance of the Fort, with orders not to advance a step beyond, or in any way to interfere. The old sick king was informed of this fact by his own attendants. When he had heard the news he sent back this dignified request to the British Commissioner, who lived outside the city gates:—"Sir, do you think that my dead body will fight against the English? May I not be allowed even to die in peace?"

The Commissioner, when he received this message, at once withdrew the regiment of soldiers, with an apology, and the old Emperor was left alone.

In spite of the widespread and rapid decay that had taken place in other directions during the reign of the last Moghul Emperors, Urdu literature made great progress. This was perhaps the most noticeable event in the history of the city at that time. Old Delhi had given birth to its youngest child, namely, the Urdu language, as a literary medium of the first historical importance.

During the eighteenth century, Persian had been the Court language all over the North of India, reaching as far down as Bengal. It was

spoken in the presence of the king, and it was employed in the inscription of the royal edicts. But early in the nineteenth century a momentous change occurred. The Urdu language and script, which were both very near to the Persian in character, began to live, as it were, a separate life of their own, so that a kindred literature was produced which gradually diverged from the Persian forms and became adapted to India itself. Words of Sanskrit derivation, employed by the Hindus, found free access into this language, whose roots were firmly established in Islam. The Court of the Moghul Emperor became the centre of this change in the literary world, which was to have such an important bearing on the history of the whole of Northern India as the nineteenth century advanced.

A revival of Bengali literature, under Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the North-east of India, corresponded to this revival and regeneration of Urdu literature in the North-west.

Later on, so I have been told, there was brought to Delhi from Calcutta a printing press, and the first Urdu newspaper was edited by Maulvi Mhammmad Baqir. Still later, an English newspaper also made its appearance, which was edited by Mr. Place. It was called the *Delhi Gazette* ; but about this I could not get any certain information. It would be very interesting to find records of these newspapers, if their files are still in existence. In subsequent chapters of this book I shall try to explain the service rendered to Urdu literature by Munshi Zaka Ullah, and how he nearly succeeded in making Urdu the medium for secondary and higher education, instead of English. Here it is only

necessary to make clear that the Urdu literary movement within the royal palace in Delhi, which produced poets and gave scope to the genius of the royal house, did not end in vanity and vexation of spirit. Even though to-day the last relic of that royal house has passed away, this noble monument of Urdu literature remains.

The British administration, outside the royal palace, was carried on as far as possible unobtrusively. There were no separate civil courts. The executive and revenue officers decided both civil and criminal suits, under the same summary jurisdiction. The amount of litigation was exceedingly small, and in that respect Old Delhi differed remarkably from what is prevalent to-day.

Sir Theophilus Metcalfe was perhaps the most famous among the Resident Commissioners. He used to live in the very large bungalow, which is intact at the present time on the banks of the River Jumna at the foot of the ridge outside Delhi. This massive building, with its cool and spacious chambers, is still called Metcalfe House.

The story runs that during the hot weather he used to ride out each night in a carriage drawn by six magnificent horses along the Qutab Road, which was kept in good repair for that purpose. He then would pass the night in the purer and cooler air close to the rising ground whereon the Qutab Minar is built. It is possible to conjecture also that the scene of those ancient buildings, almost unsurpassed in their beauty, even in their ruined state, had some attraction for him. We might be tempted to think of him looking out towards Tuglakabad, and also to



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the intervening ruins of seven buried cities, while he meditated on the vanity of human wishes.

If the question be asked, why the English Peace, which seemed thus unobtrusively to fit in with the lives of the common people, was immediately overthrown by the first earthquake shock of the Mutiny, the answer is complex. There were elements of revolt always present within the Delhi Fort itself; and underlying the acquiescence in British rule, the humiliation of subjection to the foreigners was ever keenly felt. The remark of the dying king, that I have quoted, shows this in a strikingly poignant and dramatic manner; but it was never wholly absent. The foreigner remained a foreigner; and the humiliation of falling from the high position of the capital of a mighty empire to the low level of an insignificant local town could not but be galling in the extreme. I have witnessed the sense of this humiliation, still intensely felt, even in a gentle and forgiving old man like Munshi Zaka Ullah himself.

I can remember very vividly a scene in Delhi when I called upon one of my oldest friends at his house, just after a Durbar which had been held by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, within the Diwan-i-Am, or Hall of Audience, inside the Fort.

He had only a few moments before returned from the official ceremony and laid aside his Durbar dress and was seated at ease in pyjamas and vest. Suddenly there came upon him while he spoke with me the vision of the days that were no more, and the memory of that Hall of Audience in the Moghul times. In the anguish of his soul he said to me openly: "Oh to think

how I have degraded myself in that royal hall to-day by stooping to the stranger!" His head sank down on his breast and he lost altogether the sense of my presence while the tears poured down from his eyes. A sigh came from the depth of his soul. He did not seek to hide from me the anguish of humiliation he had been through; and I could feel it in his presence as a very terrible thing.

As far as could be ascertained by me on enquiry, the mutiny of the troops at Meerut came suddenly with a shock of vast surprise to the citizens of Delhi. The Punjab, which lay to the north of Delhi, appeared to be quite unprepared for a revolt so far-reaching and profound. There was no prolonged and hidden preparation reaching right through the Punjab.

It was in the lower provinces and among the troops enlisted further east than the Punjab and Delhi that the discontent with the British rule had reached its culminating point of open revolt. But this very fact makes it not improbable that the natural dislike of the foreigner would have smouldered on in the same manner in the Punjab and Delhi if the British occupation there also had lasted longer. For the alien nature of the British rule does not easily wear off.

This gives rise to serious reflection. The Moghul Emperors, who came originally from Central Asia, as foreigners, into a strange country, not only acclimatised themselves, but also won the affection of the people over whom they ruled. But the alien element in British character seems almost incurably to remain, and the dislike caused by it appears to increase rather than decrease as time goes on. This foreign character

of British rule seems to be accompanied by a lack of imagination which fatally wounds the warm affection, that Indians are ready to offer to the foreigner who seeks their shores, if only he has the humility and wisdom of heart to learn by intimate experience how to receive it and to return it.

In Delhi, as far as I have been able to ascertain, there was no deep-rooted hatred of the foreigner before the Mutiny began. There was simply the natural and intelligible dislike of being a conquered, instead of a ruling people. But, even taking that into account, conditions appeared tolerable enough to the average citizen, after a century of disastrous confusion, so as to make him unwilling on his own account to revolt. It was when the soldiers, who had been recruited in the more eastern provinces, began the revolt at Meerut and marched suddenly to Delhi, that the Mutiny really began. The people of Delhi were swept suddenly away in the passionate excitement of the moment; and the princes of the royal palace, who had been most bitterly humiliated of all by the British occupation, headed the revolt.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE NEW LEARNING

AN English class was opened in Delhi by the order of the British Resident Commissioner as early as the year 1827. (Before the end of 1831 there were as many as three hundred eager young students at the Delhi College and School reading English books and studying the English language.) An important movement forward had been made towards the meeting of East and West.

Meanwhile the same opposition, which had been noticeable at an earlier date at Calcutta, was levelled against the New Learning by orthodox Hindus and Musalmans at Delhi. The cry of "Religion in danger" was raised.

At Calcutta, the commanding influence of Raja Ram Mohan Roy had carried all before it in favour of progress on Western lines. He had been the greatest moral and spiritual genius that had appeared in the East for over a century. By the sheer force of his amazing personality he had overcome all serious opposition, even to such a long-delayed and much-needed social reform as the abolition of Suttee. He had helped to revive vernacular Bengali literature, while at the same time advocating the study of English and the practice of modern science. Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General, and Dr. Alexander Duff, the Scotch missionary, had heartily concurred with him in this endeavour, and the moral earnestness of these three great men had prevailed over the inertia of age-long

custom. Thus, in Bengal, there was a singularly happy coincidence of East and West being united in carrying through a programme of educational and social reform. Rarely in Indian history have men of such outstanding genius thus effectively met together from different angles to combine in a common purpose for the uplift of the human race. It is important to note, that during the whole century that followed, such a drastic and peremptory reform as this in Indian social administration was never repeated. A more cautious policy followed, and a slowness in the main lines of moral and social advance.

In Delhi, the New Learning was ushered in by responsible and cultured men from the West, but in the first instance there was no outstanding genius, such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal, to meet the West more than half-way and to acclimatise the actions taken by the British. Indeed, there was even stronger objection on the part of the orthodox, as I have already intimated, owing to the singularly vivid fear that religion itself would be undermined. This was told me on every hand by those whose fathers had themselves taken part in the great change.

While in Calcutta, the strength of orthodoxy had been found in Brahmin households, in Delhi the Muhammadan leaders had everywhere led the opposition. They were firmly and solidly convinced that the foremost reason in the minds of the British authorities for the opening of the classes in English was to convert their children to Christianity and to make them gradually adopt the Christian manner of life. Since, under certain Muhammadan rulers, especially at the first (though not under the great Moghuls) forcible

conversions had not been unfrequent, it was not unnatural that they should harbour the opinion that the Christian rulers, who had now come into power all over the North of India, would act in a similar manner.

This misconception of the situation lasted for a long time, and a suspicion grew up with it, that every influence would henceforth be used in order to change the religious customs of the country. This fear lay directly behind the outbreak among the Indian troops, in 1857, when they were compelled, entirely against their religious sentiments, to bite off the ends of cartridges that had been greased. The fact that this compulsion about the cartridges was universally believed in Upper India to be an attack upon the Hindu and Musalman faiths, reveals the strength of the suspicion in the national mind at that time. It also discloses a lack of imagination on the part of the British rulers, that they should seek to deal forcibly with such a truly conscientious objection.

It so happened that, at Delhi, the introduction of the study of English did actually lead at first to a widespread unsettlement, in the minds of the young, with regard to the orthodox religions. It was long before any student openly embraced the Christian faith; but it was known at a very early date that many of the ablest among them were inclining that way, and this led to consternation in homes where conservative piety had hitherto held undivided sway. One of the most brilliant mathematical scholars, a Hindu by birth, whose name was Ramchandra, professed openly that he believed the Christian religion to be true and Hinduism to be false. Since he was by far

the most advanced in English studies, it was inevitable that his name should be held up for a warning, as to what results might happen if the English language were allowed to be taught to the young.

The Muhammadan community in Delhi felt most keenly of all the impact of the New Learning. Though lavish Government scholarships were offered and a free education was given, the best families in the city, however poor, refused to send their children to the schools. Nevertheless, among those who had sufficient courage to break through the social boycott and receive instruction in the new sciences, there were some who were destined afterwards to become, in their own generation, the most distinguished men in North India. Some credit must be given for this brilliant advance to the intense enthusiasm created in the minds of these young men as their imaginations reached out to grasp for the first time in the history of their country the wonders of the modern world. The teaching also must have been exceptionally good. Those who were present as students, including Zaka Ullah himself, have spoken to me in the highest terms of the great ability of the staff. Mr. Taylor, the Head of the Delhi College, during the years before the Mutiny, when Zaka Ullah was present along with Professor Ramchandra, had a gift of living inspiration, which he was able to impart both to his own colleagues and also to his pupils. The records of this are abundant.

Among the first students to attend was the Hindu, Ramchandra, whom I have mentioned. He had come over from Panipat, in 1833, in order to join the school. His academic course was

brilliant from the very first, and he maintained himself by winning scholarships and prizes. Starting from a respectable family sunk in poverty, owing to the death of his father, his own studies so rapidly progressed that he became Professor of Mathematics in the College at a very early age. Later on, his brilliant work as a mathematician was honourably recognised in Europe.

There was also Nazir Ahmad, who afterwards advanced to be the leading Urdu prose-writer and novelist of the nineteenth century, and world-famous on account of his profound Arabic learning. Shahamat Ali was made, in after life, Prime Minister of Indore. Mukand Lal gained a high reputation as one of the first doctors, with a full western training, in North-west India. Ziauddin and Muhammad Husain were famous for their literary work. Altaf Husain, whose literary title was Hali, became the most renowned poet in Urdu literature, just as Nazir Ahmad was famous in prose. It is interesting to recall the rapid efflorescence of men's minds which took place in those early days. This represented the Renaissance in the north of India, just as Ram Mohan Roy and his group of followers personified the Renaissance movement in Bengal. The Delhi Renaissance came later in time than the Bengal movement, and it was less enduring in character. No horrors of bloodshed and upheaval overtook Calcutta, such as those which happened in Delhi, in 1857. It is not difficult to trace the fatal havoc to budding spiritual life which one year of the Mutiny wrought. Decay immediately overtook the revival of learning in Delhi,

from which it never recovered. It is not merely the physical side of man's nature that is injured by the dread arbitrament of War; the soul of man is injured also.

About the year 1843, the school buildings, in which the New Learning was being taught, were transferred from the Ajmere Gate to the Royal Library. This was not far from the Kashmere Gate, and close to the Arsenal. To-day, I believe, some of the old buildings of the Delhi College are still being used as class rooms for the Government High School. They may be seen, slightly below the level of the road, before the Post Office is reached on the main highway through the city which leads past St. James's Church right on to the Delhi Gate and Humayun's Tomb.

The English books that were first used were obtained from the Calcutta Book Society. But there were interminable delays owing to the difficulties of transport for a thousand miles, when railways did not exist and roads were incredibly bad. I have been told that in the first instance a single English book was taken by the pupils themselves and translated page after page into Urdu and then revised by the College staff. Written copies of these translations were handed round, or dictated, and thus the New Learning spread. No doubt, these very difficulties added to the zest for this modern knowledge and made education itself creative.

A quotation from Professor Ramchandra's *Memoirs* reads as follows:—"The doctrines of ancient philosophy taught through the medium of Arabic were thus cast in the shade before the more reasonable and experimental theories of modern science. The old dogma, for instance,

that the earth is the fixed centre of the Universe, was generally laughed at by the higher students of the Oriental, as well as by those of the English Department of the Delhi College. But the learned men, who lived in the city, did not like this innovation on their much-loved theories of the ancient Greek Philosophy, which had been cultivated among them for many centuries past."

Ramchandra goes on to write a further account of the first open conflicts of the New Learning with the Old. "We commenced," he says, "a monthly magazine at the cheap rate of fourpence a month in which notices of English Science were given. Not only were the dogmas of ancient philosophy exposed, but many of the Hindu superstitions were openly attacked. The result of this was, that many of our countrymen condemned us as infidels and irreligious."

From one of those, who had been a student in those early days, I learnt that the nickname first given to these innovators by the orthodox city people had been "philosophers." But this had become quickly changed to "atheists" by those who misunderstood their growing laxity in the matter of religious observance and ritual.

As a simple matter of fact, the Delhi Renaissance, if it may so be called, was remarkably free from any direct tendency towards irreligion. It differed from the Bengal Renaissance in this respect. Practically all the teachers who came to the North of India, and most of the English servants of the East India Company, were religious men. Thus the New Learning, along with those who taught it, had never become associated with atheism in the young students' minds at Delhi. Certainly, all the elders, whom

I have met personally in later life, were markedly religious men. They possessed a sincere faith in God and strove to do what was right.

A very tiny band of the most brilliant among them became Christians. I have spoken about Professor Ramchandra, who was chief leader among these first Indian Christians in the Punjab. Dr. Chiman Lal belonged to the same group. Their conversion gave a great shock to traditional conservative religion in the Punjab. They were true followers of Christ, in self-abnegation, and were prepared to die for their faith. Chiman Lal was killed by the mutineers, and Ramchandra barely escaped with his life.

Other students of the Old Delhi College were outstanding leaders afterwards in quite a different way. Some were the chief promoters of efforts to reform Hinduism from within. Some became staunch supporters of Sir Syed Ahmad's great "Aligarh Movement," which was destined to revive Islam. But as far as I have been able to trace, after careful enquiry, not a single one of them ever gave up religion altogether; therefore, the popular opinion about the New Learning, as leading directly to irreligion, was entirely unfounded.

There has been given me by one of my pupils in Delhi an interesting account of the different original courses of English, which were followed in the Old Delhi College; it had been kept in the records of his family. In English poetry, Goldsmith's *Traveller* and *Deserted Village* along with Pope's *Essay on Man* came in the first course. Then followed some books of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in the second year. Shakespeare's plays were studied in the highest class of all.



The list of prose books is not complete; but a book called Richardson's *Selections* figures in the first course. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, and Burke's *Essays and Speeches* are among the later books to be studied. Burke was evidently very popular with this earlier generation of Indian students. This probably accounts for the somewhat ornate style of English writing, which was first in fashion when those who had imbibed the New Learning took to creating their own individual forms of English prose composition.

One interesting difference appears between Bengal and the Punjab at this earliest stage of all. In Bengal, a sudden passion of literary enthusiasm for the newly discovered English novelists and poets swept everything else before it. But the students in the North of India did not take very kindly to their new studies in English literature. By far the most popular side of the education offered in the Old Delhi College was that which dealt with Science. Here, the interest was paramount, and it soon extended into the homes of the students within the city, where the new experiments would be repeated as far as possible in the presence of the parents.

Munshi Zaka Ullah, in his old age, used to tell me with kindling eyes how eagerly these scientific lectures were followed, and how, after each lecture, the notes used to be studied, over and over again, and copied out by many hands. It was like entering into a wholly undiscovered hemisphere of the human mind. The young students were also taught by enthusiastic teachers. They were allowed to try astonishing experiments with unknown chemical gases. They

were invited to dip into the mysteries of Magnetism, which was just then coming to the front as a freshly discovered science. There was much yet to come; but these things formed actually for them a new world.

The young students used to go back to their homes—their minds and imaginations overflowing with startling ideas—to dream at night about the marvellous things they had seen and heard during the day. It is little wonder that, here and there, the scholars who had taken up these studies first and had been filled with this new wine of knowledge, broke through the old restraints and customs, and demanded a life less bound by formal acts of prayer and worship than that of conventional orthodox religion. It is little wonder, also, that the New Learning itself became suspect by those who temperamentally belonged to the old school of thought.

One further point of peculiar interest in the Delhi Renaissance was this, that the Oriental Department, which chiefly was concerned with Arabic and Persian Literature, became very popular indeed. The classes, taught through the medium of Urdu, were not deserted for the new English studies. The standard reached in Persian and Arabic was often high. Later on, it will be necessary to explain how tragically Maulvi Imam Baksh, the teacher of Oriental literature, was killed at the time when Delhi was captured. He must have been a very remarkable and gifted scholar. From all sides, I have heard the same high testimony about his high merits as a teacher. His reputation was as great with the Hindus as it was among the Musalmans.

In addition to the Old Delhi College, with its

western science and its new Oriental Department, there was also in Delhi a very famous school of medicine, representing the old Greek tradition, called Yunani. This flourished in the middle of the city, near the Chandni Chowk. It went by the name of Tibbia, and it has recently been enlarged and transformed by the genius of Hakim Ajmal Khan, one of the noblest and most self-sacrificing men that modern India has produced. His great work was left partly unfinished at the time of his lamentable death in the year 1927. In this school of medicine, the western methods of healing are studied side by side with the eastern methods. The age-long experience of India itself is not neglected, while modern methods of surgery and healing are used.

Munshi Zaka Ullah was an ardent supporter of the Tibbia, and during the greater part of his long life acted as Vice-President of this indigenous institution. Ajmal Khan's family tradition of high and distinguished Musalman culture and humanity lay behind it. Hakim Mahmud Khan and Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan belonged to the same family, and were leaders of medical research in their own day.

Ahsan Ullah Khan was an extraordinary man; and I have heard much about him from those who had held him in the highest possible esteem. He was famous throughout the North of India for religious learning and devotion. He was also a great philosopher. Furthermore, he had studied Indian history and Persian literature as well as medicine. With unbounded generosity, he used to help the poor and needy in their distress; and he gave his medical services to poor Hindus and Musalmans alike, according to the

noble tradition of his family. At the time of his death the whole city of Delhi mourned for him as one of its greatest benefactors; and "Hali" wrote one of his finest memorial poems about him.

The same deep regard was paid to the memory of Hakim Ajmal Khan, the younger member of the same family, when he died, after a life of sacrifice for the poor and of devoted service for his country. With him also passed away, as I have written, one of the last links of this Old Delhi, which had derived its traditions of culture and refinement direct from the great Moghuls.

When the history of this efflorescence of modern learning in Delhi (which I have ventured to call the Delhi Renaissance) comes to be written in full, in its true perspective, side by side with what was happening contemporaneously in the rest of India, I believe that a high place will be given to it. The movement represents a process, which is still incomplete, whereby East and West are coming together into a unity in terms of creative life and thought. This true and worthy meeting of East and West, as equal partners in human progress, is by far the greatest event happening in our own day and generation. The signs are not altogether favourable as yet for a wholesome advance in which mutual help shall be rendered and received. The superiority complex is still inordinately developed in the West, in spite of all that happened in the European War to humiliate mankind. It is not yet sufficiently realised that such an attitude of racial pride is certain to provoke reaction.

From the side of the East, on the other hand, the danger still lies in artificial imitation. But

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any such mere copying of the West can never lead to true regeneration.

What makes the Delhi Renaissance so profoundly interesting to the historian is the fact that these men, about whom I am writing, did things on their own initiative and thought things out for themselves. Just as, in Bengal, the New Learning brought with it an astonishing revival of Bengali literature and music and art, which found its culmination in Rabindranath Tagore, so also, at Delhi, Urdu literature has flourished along with modern science, and Muhammad Iqbal may be pointed to, in our own age, as the crown of its creative achievement. Indeed, if this budding movement in the North, which I am recording, had not been blighted by the cruel havoc of war in 1857, still greater results might have ensued, and it might have been compared in its importance to the human race with the Bengal Renaissance itself.

For its development was rapidly proceeding westward towards Persia, Arabia and Turkey, just as the effects of the Bengal movement had helped to awaken the countries further East. But the Mutiny in the North threw this westward development backward for at least one whole generation; and the city of Delhi itself never recovered its supremacy as a centre of intellectual advance.

## CHAPTER V

### ZAKA ULLAH'S FAMILY

MUNSHI ZAKA ULLAH was born in a house situated between the Great Mosque and the Delhi Palace, on April 20th, 1832. The family, into which he was born, had been for many generations the trusted teachers of the Royal House of Timur. Originally, its descent was traced to Abu Bakr, the first successor of the prophet.

In early Moghul times, this ancient family had its home at Ghazni, in Central Asia. Hafiz Muhammad Ali had come, at a late period in his own life, into India and settled at Lahore. "Hafiz" is the honoured title in Islam, which is given to those who can repeat by heart the whole Quran. He was appointed, by royal command, chief tutor to the young Prince, who in later life had occupied the imperial throne at Delhi. From that time forward the family permanently resided in Delhi, as tutors to the Emperor's children; this became their hereditary task.

On Hafiz Muhammad Ali's death, his son Muhammad Ibrahim, who was also entitled "Hafiz," succeeded to his father's rank as teacher of the royal house of Timur. Then later, the eldest son, Hafiz Muhammad Baqa Ullah, succeeded to his father's post. In turn, his own son, Hafiz Muhammad Sana Ullah, became teacher.

Zaka Ullah was the second child of Sana Ullah. The first-born child, a daughter, had died in infancy; and Zaka Ullah, the eldest son, became

marked out from the first for succession to the post of teacher in the imperial palace. All his early education was based on that assumption.

The grandfather of Zaka Ullah, Hafiz Muhammad Baqa Ullah, lived beyond the age of ninety. He was a wonderful old man, very learned in Islamic literature, and highly respected by all the Muhammadans in Delhi. It was the joy of his old age to teach his little grandchild, Zaka Ullah. The child, from the very first, began to show brilliant intellectual powers. There is a story current in the family that the mother of the little boy once asked the old grandfather to administer punishment to his grandson for some small offence. But Baqa Ullah replied: "No, no. The boy is so clever and has done his lessons so well, that I cannot have the heart to punish him for any fault which he may have committed to-day."

The two of them, the old grandfather and the child, spent a great part of each day together: and it was from him that the boy inherited that deep religious temperament which ran through his whole character, making him essentially, when he grew up, a man of piety and learning. The father and mother, who were by nature and tradition profoundly religious also, added their own vital influences. But Zaka Ullah used always to relate that his grandfather had made upon him the first and strongest spiritual impression, and taught him to realise the presence of God, so that prayer had become from childhood a reality to him. His faith was thus a direct inheritance from his grandfather, and a traditional characteristic handed down from father to son in each generation.

Hafiz Baqa Ullah was known throughout the whole city of Delhi for his complete devotion to God. For seventy-two years he never missed saying the five daily prayers of Islam every day of his life in the Great Mosque. At the last, he was actually kneeling in the Great Mosque at prayer when he sank down and died. People therefore regarded him as a saint, and his memory was preserved long after his death.

Hafiz Sana Ullah, the father of the boy, was equally devout. There are people still living in Delhi who can remember his saintly life and high moral rectitude of character. They recall how Sana Ullah was never known to have acted falsely, or to have told a lie. Like his father, Baqa Ullah, he gained from the common people the name of Saint. I have spoken with those who knew Hafiz Sana Ullah very well. They have related to me from their own experience how he used to retire for meditation, and how he would sit for hours repeating verses from the Sacred Quran. Once, when he was in great poverty, and his friends had asked him to go to a celebrated Darwesh, and ask for his intercessions, in order that he might be relieved from his poverty, he had nobly replied: "No, no. If God gives me poverty, I am quite content. If I need anything, I shall seek it direct from God and not from man." This was his attitude all through his life. He waited upon God to supply every need.

Sana Ullah was more decisive in his actions than either his father Baqa Ullah, or his own son Zaka Ullah. He had a power of inward faith which carried him through the most difficult times. His courage was equal to his faith, or rather was an essential part of it. He was the



tutor of Mirza Kuchak Sultan, the youngest son of the Emperor Bahadur Shah. When the city was captured in the Mutiny, and the young prince's life was in great danger, Sana Ullah offered to make his own house into a harbour of refuge for the prince, though to do so might place the whole of his own family in imminent peril of death.

But the young Mirza, who had a deep love for his old tutor and knew how great the risk would be, nobly refused to take advantage of his generous offer and thus bring upon the family almost inevitable disaster. The prince escaped by himself to Jaipur, from whence he was taken as a prisoner to Rangoon.

During the days that followed, Sana Ullah's family had to suffer terrible hardships, which it will be necessary to describe later. Their own house, which was near to the Fort, was entirely demolished. The property was confiscated, without any compensation, and the family itself had to wander homeless while the countryside was ravaged by murderous robbers and looting soldiers.

Throughout the whole of this period, Sana Ullah, wherever he happened to be, would keep openly and fearlessly the five hours of prayer each day, which his Islamic faith had appointed. On Friday, he would bathe, wash his linen with his own hand, and wait patiently till it dried. Then, in clean garments, he would say the public prayer appointed for Friday, in complete disregard of anything that happened to be going on around him. His son, Zaka Ullah, would be very anxious at such times and would insist on keeping guard. When bands of robbers and

looters drew near, he would come up to his father and urge him to fly. But Sana Ullah would take no notice whatever, until the appointed prayers were all completed.

On one occasion, during this critical time, the whole family was brought forward, under a strong guard of soldiers, before a British officer, named Captain Wilson: Martial law was then in force. Sana Ullah and his son Zaka Ullah were called upon to give explanation as to their antecedents. When it was shown, to Captain Wilson's own satisfaction, that they were pious and peaceable citizens, he showed them great kindness and ultimately released them. Realising the danger they were in, he gave them an escort of soldiers to a place of safety.

Munshi Zaka Ullah used to relate to me that he really owed his life to the considerate kindness of that British officer; because very often, in those dangerous days, when passion and greed of plunder were let loose, even those who were acquitted were not seldom killed by soldiers, or robbers, as soon as they got outside the camp. In the very place where Captain Wilson had met them, there had been many murders of this kind, and it was only the Captain's orders and his escort which had stood them in good stead and brought them at last into safety.

Sana Ullah, after a long and eventful life, during which he had bestowed every possible care on the education of his son, passed away peacefully at the age of seventy-two. His prayers were said daily in the Great Mosque right up to the time of his last illness; and sentences from the Quran were the last words that were on his lips when he died.

But although the influence of his father and his grandfather in moulding Zaka Ullah's religious life was great, undoubtedly the strongest influence on his character and his daily conduct (as he told me himself many times), came from his mother. He was one of those many leading Indians of the nineteenth century who owed their inward purity of heart to a mother's love. From his very earliest childhood Zaka Ullah clung to his mother with a child's ardent and impetuous affection. She was a woman of very strong will, and she ruled her children as well as loved them. She would never allow a fault to be passed over, and her least displeasure was greatly feared by her sons. But she had the gift also of so winning her children's affection that they would do any thing to please their mother.

Zaka Ullah would relate the incident, how, some years before the Mutiny, the family had been in straitened circumstances, and it was very hard indeed for his father to support his six young children. But his mother sold all her ornaments and household things and purchased with the money the books that were needed for her children's education. Zaka Ullah could never tell this story without deep emotion. I remember well the occasion when he first told it to me with the tears running down his cheeks.

When he himself, as a child of twelve, received his first prize at the Old Delhi School, he ran all the way home in great excitement and stopped only when he came to his mother's arms. Then he placed the book in her hands and looked up into her dearly-loved face with a look of mingled joy and triumph. This was the attitude

of all the young children towards their mother: to please her became their greatest joy in life.

The son of Munshi Zaka Ullah has told me the following story which revealed the depth of Zaka Ullah's feelings where the memory of his own mother was concerned. "Some eight years ago," he said to me, "my father came to my house one evening. He was talking in his usual way about ordinary things, when all of a sudden, he became silent and thoughtful. Then at last he said to me with strong emotion: 'This very day, seventy years ago, my own mother brought me forth into the world.' Then he paused, unable to control himself from tears. He was so overcome with the thought of his mother, that he broke down and sobbed like a child."

"I was myself quite startled," said his son to me, continuing the narrative, "It was a great surprise to see him in that state of mind, which continued for some time, till the vivid memory passed away. What particularly affected him so much is still somewhat of a mystery to me. But there can be no doubt whatever that it was concerning his mother, that his thoughts were filled at that time. Perhaps it was the recollection of all that she had borne and suffered for him that overwhelmed him just at that particular moment. Perhaps it was the fond memory of all her goodness and affection towards himself which he recalled. Possibly, it was the sudden hope of seeing her after his own death, which could not then be far off, since he had already reached seventy years of age. Whatever it was, I record the scene just as I had witnessed it with my own eyes. To me it gave a very remarkable impression of the depth of my father's love for his

mother and the complete devotion that filled his heart."

"I can easily remember her in her old age," he continued, "for I was nine years old when she died. She was very greatly respected and revered by all. Indeed, her word in the household was always strictly obeyed. I can never forget seeing my father treating her as if he had still been her young child and she treating him in a similar way, and the terms of sweet endearment he used to employ. She was never so happy as when she had him by her side and could look down into his face; and he was never so happy as when he was with her, sitting by her and holding her hand and talking to her as if he were her child once more."

"He used to tell me,"—so the story proceeded, as Inayat described his father,—“how, when he was a young lad, he and his brothers would come home together. One of them would say: ‘Father, I have caught a pigeon.’ And another would say: ‘Father, I have learnt to-day so much Persian.’ And a third would say, ‘Father, I have read this morning so many passages from the Quran.’ His father, in his fondness for his young children, would embrace them all equally and be pleased with all their answers. But his mother would only be pleased with those who had studied well and learnt their lessons, and she would scold the one who had wasted his time in catching the pigeon. Herself, she was never idle even for a moment. From morning to night, she was always caring for the household, or else attending to her religious duties. Indeed, to put the whole matter concisely, my father used to say that all he was, in his own character, he owed to

her; and that his ingrained habits of regular work and industry, which stood him in such good stead all through his life, he obtained from seeing, when he was quite young, his mother's punctual and orderly ways."

It is not difficult, with such material as this ready to hand, to frame a picture of Zaka Ullah's childhood and early days. The laws of heredity seem to gain a special validity, in the East, among those families where the whole current of life moves evenly forward and the same tradition is accepted and handed down from grandfather to father and from father to son, in long succession.

But that current of life, which had thus run so smoothly so far, was to be suddenly broken and changed into a whirling torrent in the days of the Mutiny. Zaka Ullah himself had reached his manhood when the Mutiny came; and its story will come before us later.

During this earlier period, with which this present chapter deals, the course of events went on very much as it had done in the past. The British protection, which had begun in the year 1803, had scarcely disturbed or ruffled the surface of the slowly declining grandeur of the Moghul Court; rather, for the time being, it seemed to have arrested its complete decay.

The Emperor still ruled within the Palace inside the Fort. The city of Delhi itself enjoyed a peace and calm such as it had not known before for many years. One of the old inhabitants of Delhi, whose memory went back to those times, thus graphically described it to me. "The English Peace," he said, "became a phrase which passed into the everyday language of the common

people. A man could go to pray to the tomb of Nizam- ud -Din outside the city, and could ask for the intercessions of the saint, without any fear of robbery or murder. In the city itself law and order were kept and great prosperity prevailed."

Another, who was the oldest survivor still retaining a vivid memory of those times, said to me: "The city did not know what order was till the 'English Peace' began. My own father used to tell me how before that time looting and robbery used to go on in the open streets within the city walls, and how none could go outside the city boundaries without having an armed escort of sometimes thirty or even forty men. Even these would turn and rob the persons who hired them, and there was no remedy."

It was during these later days of peace, which had succeeded the days of violence, that Zaka Ullah was born. It was during that peace that his whole childhood was spent. He used often to refer to these early days as a time of quiet before the storm of the Mutiny came, which wrecked his father's house and very nearly ruined his own life.

Without this early foundation of security and quiet, on which his whole character was built up, it might have been altogether impossible for him to have weathered the storm and come back to a normal life once more after the tragedy of the Mutiny had been ended. But just as a ship whose hull is sound and watertight answers to the rudder during a storm, though the giant waves dash it out of its course for a moment, so Zaka Ullah's life responded to its most deeply-set instinct of trust and confidence and peace as soon as ever the storm of the Mutiny abated.

## CHAPTER VI

### ZAKA ULLAH'S EARLY LIFE

ZAKA ULLAH, when quite young, was a very beautiful child and a great favourite among the ladies of the Moghul Palace within the Fort. When he was six or seven years old he used to be taken on festival occasions and at other times by his father, who was tutor to the royal princes and princesses, within the palace, in his embroidered dress and gold-laced cap, to see the fireworks and to be welcomed with little presents by the ladies who had graciously commanded his attendance. He had a very vivid recollection in after years of these occasions, and used to describe the splendid illuminations of the palace. His grandfather, from time to time, would exhibit his grandson's wonderfully bright intelligence, and the royal ladies admired him, questioning him about what he had learnt. The little child would go back home to his mother very excited and show the presents that had been given him.

Zaka Ullah, during our conversations, would often refer to those very early days, and contrast the Delhi he saw then with the Delhi of later times. It was impossible for him ever to forget the kindness of the royal family to him in his childhood, and he would describe every detail when telling the story.

There was a fund of personal loyalty, which formed a very strong side of Zaka Ullah's



character, and had a beauty of its own. In a strange manner, which I shall describe later, he was able to transfer this, without any conscious effort, to Queen Victoria, whom he idealised in his historical book, called *Victoria Namah*. This loyalty to those whose salt he had eaten was a family tradition inherited from many generations of ancestors. It has a singular value of its own, and it will be a sad thing if the modern world can find no place for it.

There can be no doubt that his father, Sana Ullah, acted wisely in sending him at an early age to the daily discipline of school and college. Too much of the court life might soon have spoilt him, and enervated him with luxury in his childhood. The atmosphere of the Delhi school and college, together with the daily companionship and bracing rivalry of his equals, gave him exactly the stimulus that was needed to develop all his talents. Yet the effort that had to be made, and the opposition that had to be overcome, before he was able to enter the new English school, were by no means negligible factors.

We can only with difficulty realise to-day what a struggle it must have been, both for his grandfather and for his father, who were deeply and punctiliously religious in their own characters, to give up their child unreservedly and wholeheartedly to the new English education.

For this strange learning from the West, which had suddenly appeared, was already being openly called "Kafir," or infidel; it was openly said to produce "atheists." On the mother's part, also, such an action showed great strength of mind and firmness of purpose. No doubt they were all helped in their decision by the famous words

of the Prophet, which are one of the supreme distinctions of Islam, as a living faith of mankind: "Get knowledge, wherever it is to be found, even as far as China." That great sentence has been the means, in every age, of breaking down the barriers which have separated Islam from alien cultures. This principle, underlying Islam, accounts for the fact, that assimilation of fresh knowledge has been one of its distinguishing marks throughout all Islamic history, and is still visible to-day.

It was abundantly evident to me, from all that I saw of the family, of which Zaka Ullah was a member, that there was a true family tradition of liberal culture. This went back to the remote times when his ancestors lived in Central Asia, where Islamic learning flourished. For we must not think of Ghazni, from whence Zaka Ullah's family had come, as remote from literature and art; rather, it was in one of the main currents of world culture for many centuries.

Zaka Ullah was only twelve years old when he entered the Old Delhi College. His father, from whom he inherited his brilliant intellect, used to go over his lessons with him each afternoon, when he had returned from his classes, and had brought with him some new wonder of modern science to disclose with all the excitement of a young child. Concerning his professors at the College, he used to speak with the greatest reverence and affection in after years, especially of his Persian and Arabic teacher, Maulvi Imam Baksh, whose *nom de plume* was Sahbai. This Maulvi was a distinguished gentleman of Delhi, a man of high moral character and liberal culture. He gave help to Sir Syed Ahmed when

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he was writing his *Archaeology of Delhi*. No professor was more sincerely loved by his pupils than Imam Baksh. His personality made such an impression on young Zaka Ullah, that thirty years after, when he himself was lecturing as a professor of Persian literature, to the students of the Muir Central College, at Allahabad, he used to say to his pupils that he felt as if the presence of Maulvi Imam Baksh was with him while he was speaking to them. Of all the heroes of learning, in this Renaissance, he was the greatest.

In the terrible scenes which followed the sack of Delhi, during the Mutiny, when the wildest passions were let loose, some military firing took place in that quarter of the city where this old professor lived, and his house, along with others, was rased to the ground. The Maulvi himself and most of his relatives were killed, and now his family is almost extinct. Zaka Ullah used to mourn deeply his loss. It was one of the bitterest memories to him of the Mutiny itself. He said to me, "This deed of blood can never be forgotten."

As Zaka Ullah grew older he specialised in mathematics. While engaged in that study he became the most brilliant and promising pupil of Professor Ramchandra, and a warm affection sprang up between the two. This intimate companionship in study led unfortunately at one time to that very acute and painful misunderstanding to which I have already referred. The rumour had somehow got abroad that Ramchandra's own favourite pupil, Zaka Ullah, was about to follow his tutor's lead and openly profess himself a Christian; but this was never re-

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motely likely to have taken place. It revealed a complete misunderstanding of the situation. Their friendship was of the intellectual type, common among scholars who are solely devoted to learning and engaged in the same search after scientific truth; for to both Ramchandra and his young companion, the first approach to Western science and mathematics was full of an intense interest approaching to awe and wonder. It did not mean in this instance spiritual discipleship, although questions of religion must have been discussed between them. At the same time, it is clear that this early and intimate companionship with Professor Ramchandra, at the old Delhi College, broadened his views of religion and gave to him, from his youth onwards, that width of vision and spirit of tolerance which made his character so beautiful in its powers of sympathy in later years.

Professor Ramchandra was a man of fearless sincerity and very strong convictions. The fact that he had been obliged to break with all his Hindu relations and to undergo much persecution when he became a Christian had made him somewhat stern and abrupt in manner, and often harshly controversial towards others; but he had a deeply affectionate heart and was upright in his actions. His love for Zaka Ullah was very sincere. There was no sacrifice he would not have been prepared to make for his young friend.

At the time when the Mutiny broke out and the city of Delhi fell for a time into the complete possession of the mutineers, Professor Ramchandra's life, as a Christian convert, was in the greatest possible danger. Dr. Chiman Lal, a fellow Christian, a man of sincere piety and

given to good works, had been at once killed by the soldiers. A search was then made for Professor Ramchandra. Rai Piyare Lal Sahib, of Delhi, one of the very few survivors, has told me how on the morning that Delhi was occupied by the mutineers from Meerut, at about ten o'clock, he met Zaka Ullah hurrying towards the Delhi College, at the imminent risk of his own life, in order to endeavour by some means to save Professor Ramchandra. He reached the College, but found that the Professor had already been warned beforehand by another of his pupils. Zaka Ullah himself was able to render further aid at this critical moment. Professor Ramchandra remaining for some days in hiding, in the heart of the city, managed at last, by the help of his own students, to escape in disguise to the open country and thus got safely away. He had endured in the interval the most terrible anxiety and suffering.

When the Mutiny was over, Professor Ramchandra was able to return some of the kindness of his young friend and pupil, who had helped to save his life by his timely warning. He obtained military passports both for him and for his family, which enabled them to come back into the city. He also did him many other acts of service.

To return to the pre-Mutiny days. Zaka Ullah's College friends at this time were Nazir Ahmad, Maulvi Karim Baksh, Piyare Lal, Chandu Lal, Kanhya Lal, Mir Babar Ali, and Zia-ud-din. Each one of these has been in some degree famous in his own way. Nearly all of them passed away before Zaka Ullah himself.

His closest friend, however, though not a con-

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temporary at the College, was Maulvi Sami Ullah Khan, who in later life retired from Government service, when he was District Judge in Oudh. This most intimate friend of all died some three years before the death of Zaka Ullah. The latter spent his own closing days of literary activity in writing, in Urdu, the memorial of his friend.

Some three weeks before Munshi Zaka Ullah's death, another life-long friend, Khwaja Altaf Husain, one of the greatest of the band of Urdu poets, in the Delhi Renaissance, came over from Panipat to visit him. Zaka Ullah embraced him, and treated him with the utmost affection. The two old friends sat long together side by side. While they were talking, Zaka Ullah presented "Hali" (to use his literary title) with a copy of his own memoir of Maulvi Sami Ullah Khan, who had been a very close friend of both of them. Turning to Hali he said: "Writing this has been my last work: it has killed me."

What he meant was, that it had so pained him to revive all the memories of his old friend, and had so exhausted him, that it had brought on his final illness. When Hali was taking his farewell, Zaka Ullah said to him quietly: "This is our final meeting in this life; may God keep you in all your ways."

The prophecy came true. The two old friends never met again on earth.

During that last fatal illness, Dr. Nazir Ahmad, his other life-long friend, was lying on his own bed of sickness, enfeebled and often tortured with rheumatism. Zaka Ullah would send him messages, which I had to convey in person to Nazir Ahmad. The latter would never fail to send affectionate messages in return. Thus I

was able to see how very deep and strong these personal friendships were which Zaka Ullah made. It would be impossible to judge truly his character without taking into account the large part that they played in his daily life. As we shall see later, he was a very domestic man, devoted to his wife and children and home. But almost equally absorbing to him were these personal friendships, which were continued with the same warmth of intimacy and devotion right up to his closing years.

The more one realises the local situation of Delhi in those days, at a distance of one thousand miles from Calcutta, with no connecting railway at all, the more remarkable appears this sudden outburst of brilliant intellectual life, which came with the establishment of the Old Delhi College. No such period ever arrived again in the history of the city during the nineteenth century. For many years; at a much later date, it was my daily task to teach in St. Stephen's College, Delhi. My own experience of the intellectual life of the city of Delhi was utterly unlike that which I have related about these early days. The commercial atmosphere of the whole district to-day lies with a heavy weight upon Delhi. The old culture and refinement and intellectual alertness now appear to be rapidly passing away. We have had no brilliant array of students in modern times such as existed in Zaka Ullah's days.

The contrast was so great that I used to ask him about this very point. He would tell me that what I said was correct. There had never been anything like it again. He put down a great deal of this earlier efflorescence to the newness of the subjects which were taught as part

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of the English learning. It was, he told me, like entering some magic and enchanted land. No one could tell what might be revealed next. The scientific experiments, above all, held their imaginations. The vivid anticipation of fresh discovery was always with them. They felt themselves to be pioneers in their own country, and therefore dreamt dreams and saw visions.

Among his own contemporaries, Zaka Ullah had a great reputation for being able to solve all the mathematical problems that were set before him. It was quite a common experience to find that he alone had been able to obtain a correct solution to some question which had been put before the whole class. Even while he was still a student, at the early age of seventeen, he had brought out his first mathematical work in Urdu. The Delhi people were greatly surprised and delighted at a mere lad undertaking such a difficult task, and the first edition was sold out in four days.

Zaka Ullah took the whole of the profits, amounting to thirty-two rupees, the first sum of money he had ever earned by his own writings, and purchased some gold ear rings for his sister. One of the uncles of Sir Syed Ahmad, a Nawab of Delhi, whose house was looked upon as a strange place of mathematical and astronomical learning, full of scientific instruments, with pulleys hanging from the roof, and astral globes and charts and astronomical tables scattered about, sent for the lad who had dared to bring out a book on mathematics at the early age of seventeen. "Well, young man," he said to him, "I hear that you are a second Euclid. I will give you three days to solve a mathematical problem



for me." At the end of the three days Zaka Ullah came back to him and said that the problem was insoluble, because at the final stage it was necessary to do something geometrically which was impossible.

The Nawab was greatly surprised and pleased, "My dear lad," he said, "you have really solved the problem, because you have arrived at the final stage beyond which there is no solution."

The whole atmosphere of those early days was electrical. Stories like those which I have told were passed on from one house to another and treasured up in the family. The renaissance at Delhi gave a sudden illumination to the age, which then sunk back into darkness.

This was really the end of the great tradition of the past glory and lustre of the Moghul rule. The light flickered and leapt up for a brief moment before it died away. More than any other single cause, the Mutiny killed it.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MUTINY AT DELHI

It was not easy for anyone in later years to get Munshi Zaka Ullah to talk much about the Mutiny itself, and the things that he had witnessed then with his own eyes. The subject had still a horror for him. He always avoided it, except on very intimate occasions, when he had something special to say about it. Therefore it was chiefly from indirect hints and comments, in the course of many conversations; that I gathered from him much of the information which I am now about to record.

On account of very straitened circumstances, due chiefly to the general decay of the Moghul Court, Zaka Ullah had felt compelled to refrain from marriage in early life. He thus departed from the almost universal custom in the North of India among Musalmans. This had meant a great sacrifice on his part, because he was essentially domestic in his nature and extremely fond of children. But it so happened that because of this, when the Mutiny broke out, he had no wife and children of his own. He had just reached twenty-five years of age, and was living with his parents, supporting them by his own industry and learning.

During the terrible days that followed, this one fact, that he was unmarried, served him in good stead. He was able to give his undivided attention to his father and mother, who were now growing old, and also to his young brothers and

sisters, who needed his protection. His own immediate anxiety was chiefly at first concerning his intimate Christian friends, who were in the Delhi College. There were those whom he loved most dearly, and he determined to rescue them if possible, even at the peril of his own life.

The story has already been told of his eager impetuous attempt—at the very first moment, when the Mutiny broke out—to save if possible the life of his deeply-loved Professor, the Christian convert, Ramchandra. The actual news concerning Zaka Ullah and his friendship with Ramchandra seem to have become known to the mutineers, and the fact that the city people imagined, however mistakenly, that Zaka Ullah desired to become a Christian, added to the volume of suspicion against him. He was, indeed, at this time, in very great danger of his own life being taken by the mutineers. His action, therefore, in seeking immediately to save the life of Professor Ramchandra, reveals a fearless courage that was very noble indeed.

To the young students of the Delhi College, who had imbibed the New Learning, the Mutiny came as a terrible shock, shattering at one blow their cherished hopes and aims. Their own Principal, Mr. F. Taylor, whom they loved and admired, was killed. For some weeks, no news whatever was heard of Professor Ramchandra; and the report was spread about that he was killed also. Their minds were in a tumult. They did not know which way to turn, or what to do. To go against their own countrymen, who had revolted, seemed to them impossible: to side with them in the revolt seemed even more unthinkable. Not a single student took that latter course.



THE MASJÍD-I-KUTB-UL-ISLÁM.  
View of the Great Arches.

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During the time that the city was in the hands of the mutineers, they were all of them under suspicion.

As far as I could gather from Munshi Zaka Ullah himself, he kept in retirement at this time and told others to do the same. He remained as far as possible within his own house, hardly going out at all, even for a single hour. He went on with his own studies in private and sought to keep himself altogether outside the range of public affairs. The family difficulties rapidly increased; and at times he hardly knew where to obtain food for all those who were members of the household and dependent on him for support. The prices of all provisions became dearer, and for some weeks they were on the verge of acute destitution.

More than once he spoke to me about the great and abiding comfort that faith and prayer had been to him at such a time. "Without faith in God," he said to me, "I could never have got through that period of horror and dismay. But worse was yet to follow; and it was in the last stage of all, when we were entirely homeless, that prayer helped me most of all."

The final assault from the Ridge under Nicholson upon the Kashmir Gate was at last made. The city was recaptured by the British. Nicholson himself fell in the breach and died in the hour of victory. His death was a grave calamity, not only for the English, but also for the city. He was a strong character, famed throughout the North for his courage. Being a man of iron will, with a stern sense of duty, he might have been able to keep discipline among the British troops, after the victory, when no one else could keep it.

It will be best, in order to avoid all danger of exaggeration, to tell what happened, during the disastrous days that followed, not in my own words, but in those of despatches and correspondence which I have copied out from the two volumes published by the Intelligence Department of the Government of India. I shall do this as briefly as possible.

First there is the record of C. B. Saunders, the Commissioner at Delhi, to W. Muir (afterwards Sir W. Muir), at Agra. He writes as follows:—

“Only those on the spot know the difficulties with which our commanders had to deal (i.e. after the assault). The whole Army was utterly and entirely disorganised, and within three or four hours of the assault, discipline was almost at an end. For several days, a majority of our European troops might almost be said to be suffering from *delirium tremens*. The native troops were almost as, if not equally, disorganised from similar causes, and from the plunder which fell into their hands.”

The same official, in another despatch to W. Muir, wrote briefly as follows:—

“General Wilson ordered that no protection tickets should be valid, unless they were countersigned by himself. The consequence was that but few obtained anything like protection. No guards could be furnished, and before two or three days had elapsed, there was not a house that had not been ransacked and plundered, friends and foes of the Government suffering to an equal extent. The chief wealth of the citizens had been bricked up and plastered over. The Sikhs and others with the military force very soon learnt the artifice, and a very considerable amount of plunder was carried off which will not enrich the Prize Fund.

“The Prize Agents and the Army generally were rather anxious to lay it down, that the whole city of Delhi had become the property of the Army, having been taken in assault, and were anxious to dispose of real as well as personal and moveable property.

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"The consequence has been that all the wealth of the city, which has escaped the clutches of independent plunderers, has been transferred by night-time here and the guarantee has been abused. The city has been so thoroughly ransacked and plundered, that parties are not willing to pay much for their effects still remaining untouched. . . The authorities have not gone on any very fixed principles in disposing of property, but on the contrary, the whole question has been marked by want of principle more than anything else."

It is often stated that this hour of madness among the European soldiers was due to the stories of the outraged honour of English women, who had been killed during the Mutiny. As this charge against the mutineers has been very often repeated, and has formed the subject of sensational novels written especially by authors, who have dealt with the Mutiny in fiction, it is well to give at this point the direct evidence taken immediately on the spot. Mr. W. Muir, who was at the head of the Intelligence Department in the affected districts, and perhaps the most well informed of those special civilian authorities, who had to deal with Mutiny affairs, writes on December 30th, 1857, as follows:—

"My connexion with the Intelligence Department, at the Headquarters of the Government at Agra, has brought me during the past six months into contact with messengers and spies from all parts of the country. I gladly add my testimony, that nothing has come to my knowledge, which would in the smallest degree support any of the tales of dishonour current in our public prints. Direct evidence, wherever procurable, has been steadily and consistently against them.

"The people,—those who must have known, had there been any case of outraged honour, and would have told us,—uniformly deny that any such things were ever perpetrated or thought of. The understanding of the people on this point, if, as I believe, we have correctly apprehended it, cannot be wrong.

"Judging from the great accumulation of negative evidence, supported as it is on many important points by direct and positive proofs, it may be safely asserted that there are fair grounds for believing that violation before murder was never committed."

That English women and children were killed by the mutineers has never been questioned; but it is a relief to be able to remove this baseless rumour about violation entirely from the mind. Not only was Mr. W. Muir's personal evidence taken, but also a special Commission of Enquiry was held on the spot. This sat at Agra directly after the capture of the city of Delhi, and made its report before the end of the year 1857. It came to the same conclusion as Mr. W. Muir, that no such acts of dishonour had been committed.

Yet it is a deplorable fact that positive rumours of this kind were very widely circulated; and the delirium from which the European troops suffered was partly due to these false reports. This cannot, however, in any way excuse what happened at Delhi, which left a stain on British military history. Those who would wish to pursue the matter further should study E. J. Thompson's book, entitled *The other side of the Medal*.

For days, after the capture of Delhi, nobody's life was safe. Murders were common, violence was almost universal. Zaka Ullah, with his delicate, sensitive nature, saw these things and heard about them. He was forced himself to be actually at times an eye witness; and the sight could never be blotted out from his mind. The murder of the Professor whom he loved and revered most in the world, Maulvi Imam Baksh,



a saintly man who had helped forward to the utmost of his power the Delhi renaissance, was in all probability the culminating point in the whole tragedy to Zaka Ullah. His former revulsion against the mutineers, who had killed Mr. Taylor and others, including women and children, now turned back again upon this conquering army, which in the hour of victory committed such unspeakable atrocities. The news of the slaughter of the royal princes near Humayun's tomb added to the misery of those days. But these very horrors were soon to come much closer still, and to invade Zaka Ullah's own family circle. For the order went forth that every house within the area between the Delhi Fort and the Great Mosque was to be rased to the ground, as an act of punishment, and also for military reasons. No compensation at all was to be given. Innocent and guilty were to suffer, both alike.

The old house and property of the family of Zaka Ullah, as we have seen, came within this area. Therefore, along with many hundreds of other innocent people, his aged father and mother and the whole family were ruthlessly driven out. They found themselves, homeless and outcast, starving and destitute, at a time when multitudes of others were in the same condition. There was no place, within the city itself, to turn to for refuge.

Then followed a terrible journey, a flight into the country to seek some precarious shelter there. The whole family went out together towards Nizam ud Din's tomb, which lies about three miles from Delhi outside the Delhi Gate. They slept at night on the open ground; and in the day

time they took refuge inside a ruined tomb, every hour anticipating that the end had come. Only once did Munshi Zaka Ullah speak to me about those days of torture and hunger, of dread and horror. It was evident to him, especially in after years, that the faith of his father had been, above all, their protecting shield. His own faith in God had also stood firm in that most terrible hour of all.

Much I have related elsewhere; I can only tell here one more story as he told it to me on a memorable evening in Delhi. During one whole night, he said to me, he lay wide awake in anguish. He could not sleep on account of his anxiety for those whom he loved far more dearly than his own life. He watched in silence his father. The whole night through, Sana Ullah remained silent and wakeful, keeping a vigil of prayer to God. His face was filled with light in the darkness—a light which seemed to come from within. In the morning, Zaka Ullah learnt that a band of plunderers, bent on looting and murdering, had passed close by the very place and had looked in; but they had turned aside, when they saw the old religious saint engaged in prayer to God. Some hidden power had restrained them. Thus the family had been preserved. Zaka Ullah believed, with all his heart, that they had been saved only by his father's perfect trust in the Divine aid.

It will not be difficult to understand how the agony within Zaka Ullah's mind—the agony of shattered hopes and ideals—was even greater than the physical suffering which he and those he loved had to endure. I shall write about this more fully, when repeating his own words and

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conversations. Here, at this point, I would only trace its effects.

For a long time, he told me, the shock of those last Mutiny days was beyond all bearing. The torturing thoughts of his mind drove him at last to a melancholy that bordered on blank despair. To a man of lesser faith and piety, the result might well have been fatal. But the Governor-General, Lord Canning—called by a name of rebuke, that did him honour, "Clemency" Canning—brought about by his personality a great moral change. A quick recovery of law and order among the troops followed. To Lord Canning also was due, more than anyone else, the express refusal and repudiation of any deliberate policy of revenge. He had to endure the brunt of his fellow-countrymen's resentment for his so-called weakness; but history has amply vindicated him.

Very slowly, in Zaka Ullah's mind, the ravages caused by the Mutiny and the reprisals that followed were healed. Nature can repair her own physical injuries far more rapidly than those inflicted on the mind of men. I have a copy of a remarkable letter written by an officer, named Lieutenant Browne, in which he speaks of the days in the Delhi district that followed the disaster of the Mutiny.

"To look," he writes, "at the smiling face of the country, round Delhi, covered with luxuriant crops, it is difficult to realise that such fearful events have occurred but the other day. The people are ploughing and sowing again everywhere, and the village people have been blessed with a plentiful harvest."

The spirit of Zaka Ullah also revived, not

immediately, but as the years went by. He, too, began once more the ploughing and sowing in his own life, uprooting much that had been merely weeds, and preparing the soil for the good seed. He was able, at last, with a free conscience, to take up without misgiving and with renewed hope the inculcation of the New Learning.

He had gained also a fresh loyalty in his own personal life. This was now given to Queen Victoria the Good.

Thus, his old idealism revived and he entered the Education Department as a servant of the Queen. His domestic prospects also quickly brightened. He married the wife of his own choice, to whom he had become attached with a profound and tender love. As the years went quickly by, little children of his own were born to him—a family of sons; and he, who ever had in his own nature the heart of a child, was given the unbounded joy of fatherhood.

Thus he experienced at last the pure and sacred love of his wife completed in the growing affection of his children. In the gift sent to him, after long waiting, from God of these new spiritual blessings, the old wounds of the Mutiny were healed. His buoyant happiness returned, and his life began anew.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE VICTORIAN AGE

IF we wish to understand what was happening in India in the years succeeding the Mutiny, we have to divert our attention for a short time to Great Britain and to study the remarkable events that were taking place there in the political world. For on the political idealism, which was ushered in by Gladstone and Bright, a very great deal depended in India itself.

England had passed through a very troubled and stormy time during the critical years from 1850 to 1860. The earlier enthusiasm for liberal ideas which had been aroused by the passing of the Reform Acts, twenty years before, had subsided, and some of the worst of the old abuses had crept back again into the Administration. The Crimean War of 1854, which preceded the Indian Mutiny by three years, is now regarded by historians as a calamity due to mismanagement of public affairs. For it clearly ought never to have been fought at all. The sober mind of England began to realise that "some one had blundered."

The later revelations of incompetency in hospital and medical matters, which came to light through Miss Florence Nightingale's report, had a further chastening effect upon English public opinion. In the same way, the Indian

Mutiny, which took the English people entirely by surprise, gave a severe shock to stolid British complacency.

Thus England herself was at last in a chastened mood and prepared for a drastic reform in her home administration, and a complete change in her policy abroad. Therefore, as the century advanced, the Liberals under Gladstone came more and more into power; and the twenty years between 1870 and 1890 might well be called the liberal period in British political life.

It would be hard to overestimate the influence and weight that the name of Mr. Gladstone carried among those English-speaking Indians who had frankly accepted the New Learning. Perhaps it would even be true to say that no Englishman's name ever before, or since, had ever exercised such an attraction for the cultured classes in India. Even as late as March, 1904, when I landed in India for the first time, as a stranger to the country, I found to my surprise that the whole educated Indian community in the North of India was still maintaining unshaken its faith in the supreme greatness of all Mr. Gladstone's political ideals. The Boer War, which had just been fought, had been instinctively condemned and disliked in India; but they could point to it as an entire reversal of the Gladstonian policy, and they could show that Gladstone himself, at the end of his great career as a statesman, had thrown aside every other interest in order to seek to obtain Home Rule for Ireland. They could say with force, that Gladstone truly believed in human liberty, and also practised in his daily conduct what he professed. There was clearly much truth in all

this; and English-educated India was right in its main contention. At the same time, there was some exaggeration in the lines with which they drew the picture of Mr. Gladstone's liberal achievements.

It must be remembered that moral idealism in politics, whenever it has been sincerely practised, has always appealed to the Indian mind and delighted the Indian heart. To hear Munshi Zaka Ullah talk about Mr. Gladstone and John Bright, and to watch the chorus of approval with which his words were received in the old Library at Delhi, was one of the things that taught me most concerning the sentiment and thought of that generation in India which had grown old since the Mutiny, and had also recovered to the full its fundamental belief in British Liberalism. The moral supremacy of the great Premier, Gladstone, the greatest statesman of his age—his goodness as a man, his religious character, his pure moral life—all this was discussed evening after evening. It became clear to me where his strength lay which could bring about such a transformation. If he had been a mere politician, however clever, he could not possibly have accomplished what he did. With Munshi Zaka Ullah, especially, it was the high moral character and religious nature of his hero that told. Mr. Gladstone was a man of God. That was worth all the rest put together.

One other important factor which firmly held fast the imagination of these Indian idealists was the vivid picture continually held up before their eyes of the virtues of Queen Victoria the Good. We ourselves have come to realise since those days that, just as in the case of Mr. Gladstone,

so with Queen Victoria, the picture was partly overdrawn. For the Queen's moral goodness, genuine though it was, had a narrowness about it that was painfully evident to those who knew her best and came in closest contact with her. But she, too, had a devoutly religious character, and a firm trust in God's guidance of human events, and she was quite fearless in speaking about it. She also possessed, as a woman, those very domestic virtues which India prizes most highly of all. For she had been entirely devoted to her husband and had maintained a life-long widowhood in his remembrance. All this made her appear truly great in Indian eyes, as the educated classes read about her more and more in the public press. In Zaka Ullah's book, describing the history of her reign, he records all this at great length and with genuine enthusiasm.

But there was something far more. It was believed all over India that Queen Victoria the Good had been responsible, most of all, for the prevention of further bloodshed after the Mutiny, and that she had sent out her own royal command to Lord Canning to stop all reprisals in Northern India. She was also given the credit for the actual drafting of that truly remarkable "Proclamation" of 1858, which announced openly and plainly, in words given under the Royal Seal, that complete religious neutrality and racial equality were the principles on which her Indian Empire was established. There has never been signed in the history of British rule in India a more important document than this, in spite of its constant neglect by the administration. The chief leaders of Indian liberal thought, like



Munshi Zaka Ullah, were right in laying stress upon it and calling it the Magna Charta of Indian freedom.

Tennyson, by his poetry, did much to strengthen this idea of the immaculate virtue of the English Queen. His allusions to her, scattered throughout his poems, were learnt off by heart and quoted on all occasions. This was specially true of the verses at the beginning of the "Idylls of the King." Of all the Victorian poets, Tennyson was by far the most popular in India during last century. So great was his influence, that Queen Victoria's name, owing in a great measure to his continual poetic representation of her liberal goodness, became gradually ranked in Indian history side by side with those of King Asoka and Akbar the Great.

To Zaka Ullah himself, this analogy had become an axiom of all his historical thinking. He was never tired of referring to it, both in his writing and in his conversation; it formed the foundation of his new philosophy of Indian history, which he recorded in many volumes of lucid Urdu prose.

Lord Ripon, as the century advanced, became in India itself the central figure round whose head the halo of all this idealism was placed. He represented, as it were, all the moral virtues of British Liberalism collected on the spot. He completed, to the Indian mind, the ideal set forward by the twin names of Queen Victoria and Mr. Gladstone. For it needs to be carefully understood, when dealing with India of the last century, that the perfect Liberalism of Queen Victoria was always taken for granted. Idealists, like Zaka Ullah, little realised what a downright

Tory, in many things, the old Queen actually was, and how much she disliked Gladstone.

Lord Ripon himself was known in India to be a deeply religious statesman, who at a great cost had remained faithful and true to his conscience and his religion. It was remembered that he never began the day's work without being present at divine worship. Stories were constantly repeated and believed concerning his complete devotion to religion. His private life was known to be pure and in keeping with his religious faith. Added to all this, which was rightly important in Indian eyes, Lord Ripon had made himself supremely unpopular when he was Governor-General, among his own countrymen, because he had openly taken the Indian side in his great struggle over the Ilbert Bill, in order to uphold the ideal of the Queen's Proclamation and to maintain strict equality before the law of the land between Indian and European. This had been the one fact in his viceroyalty which had profoundly stirred the Indian imagination, and he was worthily respected and even loved for it. No Viceroy, either before or since, has ever had such an impressive farewell from Indians themselves, on leaving the shores of India, as Lord Ripon.

There is one further point to be made, if things in India towards the close of the last century are to be viewed in their proper perspective. Herbert Spencer, combining in his writings both philosophy and science, maintained among educated Indians an almost unchallenged authority as the chief exponent of the nineteenth century scientific theory of the Universe, called Evolution. The word "Evolution" appeared to sum up, for

English-educated Indians at that time, the whole trend of modern science, and to explain both the origin of the universe and the history of mankind. While there was a certain truth in Spencer's universal synthesis, which has been duly and generously acknowledged in the West, yet far more credit was given in India to his laborious exposition of the evolutionary theory than the facts deserved. Here again, as with Gladstonian Liberalism, and the character of Victoria the Good, exaggerated views were held. I was startled to find, for instance, when I first came out to Delhi, how entirely the minds of educated Indians had become obsessed by Herbert Spencer's doctrines, and what implicit faith they placed in them, as though they were quite infallible.

It was not till I came down to Bengal, in 1906, that I found those, who were frankly critical of Herbert Spencer and Gladstone and Queen Victoria alike, and had thrown off, once and for all, the yoke of humble tutelage to shifting English political and philosophical ideas. There was something refreshing in this, after the atmosphere of unreality at Delhi, with its conventional standards. It was refreshing also to find Tennyson's place in English poetry critically examined, and not taken for granted as almost supreme among the immortals.

Nevertheless, if we are apt to-day to feel surprised at the meek acceptance, on the part of educated people in the North of India, of this moral and spiritual domination from a distant country like England, when, at the very time, whole regions of thought were lying unexplored in their own books and at their own doors, we

must remember how strangely new the Western learning was, and how altogether fascinating and absorbing must have been the scientific side of it at the outset. For it brought the imagination of those, who thus studied it for the first time, and watched the verification of its experiments, almost completely under its sway. Educated Indians, in this respect, did not stand alone. There were those in England and in Europe and America, also, who submitted without question to its dictations. The psychology of the times demanded it.

To prove the point that I am trying to make and to show that their acceptance of Herbert Spencer's doctrine had nothing to do with any special mentality in India, due to subjection, we have only to look to Japan during the same period. In spite of all her pride in her own national traditions, and in spite of her own stoutly upheld and cherished independence, Japan was as completely under the sway of Herbert Spencer as ever India was. Nor did Japan throw off the yoke of Spencer's system of philosophy at an earlier date than educated India. Indeed, when the change of thought came about, the decline and fall of the crude evolutionary theory represented by Herbert Spencer was as much a world phenomenon as its rise to power had been in previous years. Bengal departed from its tradition as soon as England herself.

When, therefore, it is fully realised that Munshi Zaka Ullah was essentially a man of thought rather than a man of action; that he lived in the world of ideas rather than in the world of practical affairs, then it does not appear difficult to understand how the strain caused by the horror

of what he witnessed with his own eyes at the close of the Mutiny, gradually became less and less acute, and at length passed away in an atmosphere of new thought such as I have pictured. It became absorbed and evaporated in the sunshine of Liberalism, which Mr. Gladstone and Lord Ripon represented.

All this was made easier still for him owing to one noticeable trait in his own character which comes up before us again and again as we study carefully his life. Zaka Ullah was, to the very depth of his being, a hero-worshipper, whose spiritual nature always depended on having some personality to serve with devotion. He could hardly any more exist without an atmosphere of loyalty to some higher person about him than a fish can exist without water, or a man can breathe without air. The parallel I have drawn is scarcely too strong; and even if a slight exaggeration is there, the fact remains. His nature craved for some person to idealise, and he found what he needed in the liberal school of English political life, and also in the high moral character of Victoria the Good.

I shall write more fully on this subject when I record some of his conversations in a later chapter, and there may be some repetition; but Queen Victoria, William Gladstone, Lord Ripon, Tennyson, Herbert Spencer, these filled the vacant spaces of Zaka Ullah's mind and formed a gallery of portraits corresponding to that ideal vision of the [new Western learning which had inspired him in his younger days. I would emphasise also the fact that most of the English educated Indians of that time who had received a similar education thought in a similar manner.

At the same time it is probably true to say that his personal devotion to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan helped Zaka Ullah most of all towards finding, after the Mutiny, his new perspective. For personal loyalty to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan necessarily involved the acceptance of the British Liberal's position; because Sir Syed Ahmed had based all his hopes upon them. As a practical man, he had stood out in the field of action, just as Zaka Ullah had done in the field of thought. He had definitely offered the right hand of friendship to the British Liberals, and had asked them to help him in the College which he had founded for Muhammadan students at Aligarh. Thus had begun, what was called among Musalmans, the Aligarh Movement; Zaka Ullah and Nazir Ahmad were both alike drawn into this Movement from the very first.

It was in connection with this new institution at Aligarh that new interests began to spring up in Zaka Ullah's own mind and heart. As the years went by he was able to give them full scope, even in the midst of all his official and literary work; for every one of these things pointed manifestly to one end, namely, the encouragement of the new Western learning in the North of India by every means in his power.

The Education Department of the Government of India was at that time in its first stage of development. Scholars of high character had come out from England to take part in the work. Men like Wordsworth and Sir Edwin Arnold gave it great distinction. The status within it of celebrated Indian scholars was also one of freedom and responsibility. There is no sign,

either in his letters or correspondence, that Zaka Ullah found the ties of Government educational service irksome at that time. In Allahabad, as a professor, he built up a reputation for learning and scholarship on the one hand, and for sympathy and affection for his students on the other. This made the analogy between his position and that of Maulvi Imam Baksh at Delhi, in earlier years, which was often drawn by his pupils, very close indeed. He had the same gift of inspiration; and year by year the students rallied round him and sought his moral and spiritual guidance as well as his intellectual help. It was clear to them that he was their true friend, and he devoted himself untiringly to their service whenever they needed his aid. They knew they could at all times look to him for counsel and advice.

At the same time, the work of translation and the preparation of new Urdu text-books in science and mathematics, which he had already taken up, occupied the greater part of his leisure, whenever he was free from his lecture work in the College. It was only on Sundays (which he kept entirely apart) that he was able to offer himself unreservedly to the students as he fully wished to do. He was given, at the College, a professorship in Vernacular Literature; and this made his work of Urdu text-book publication in direct line with his work as a professor. He had also to take classes in Arabic and Persian.

As his young family grew up around him, at Allahabad, his old cheerfulness and brightness returned. He was known among his intimate friends almost as much for his wit and good humour as for his scholarship and learning. He

remained shy and bashful in public, nervous to a high degree, and very retiring. In private life, however, in the bosom of his own family, he was as happy and talkative as a child. All his outward shyness vanished as soon as he was in the seclusion of his own house. His fun with his own children would be carried on with excited animation hour after hour. It was as if his whole mind and body relaxed themselves from overstrain and tension. To his children, as they grew up, these hours of happy amusement with their father were the most memorable of all in their young lives. I have often heard from their own lips, how entirely Zaka Ullah gave himself up to their amusement till the whole room rang with uproarious laughter. Then, when they were all tired out with boisterous fun, he would gather them to his knee and place the youngest of them on his lap and tell them stories about fairies and enchanted castles and voyages over the seven seas. In the whole of Delhi it would have been difficult to find a merrier home than theirs. Exceptionally good health added greatly to the zest and happiness which surrounded his life in middle age.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE ALIGARH MOVEMENT

MUNSHI ZAKA ULLAH's great work in life is rather to be found in his writing than in his active teaching career. It is true that he had great influence with his pupils, and that they loved him and revered him with a deep personal devotion. But here his influence might be paralleled by other names. There is nothing that singled him out specially from his contemporaries. His special ability was rather revealed in the manner in which he wrestled with an entirely new educational problem. For he endeavoured to prove, when nearly everyone was against him, that higher western education could be carried on in the Indian vernacular languages and through Indian vernacular books, without insistence upon the English language and English text books as the only medium of instruction. He believed that the teaching of young children through the medium of a foreign language, imperfectly understood, ruined all true education. He fought, at the time, a losing battle, in order to prove his point; but he fought bravely to the end. It now seems that the unerring process of history will rapidly prove his solution to be the right one after all.

As the new Western learning advanced it became supremely necessary to find a scholar whose powers of expression in the Indian vernacular were flexible, simple and intelligible. At

the same time he would have to be a master of the subjects which he would be called upon to explain lucidly in the vernacular for the first time. Hitherto none of the scientific and mathematical books on modern western subjects had been written in the languages of India. The young scholar was first required to master English, a long and tedious process, almost impossible for some students, and difficult for all. The attempt was now to be made to reverse this process and give to students adequate translations in their own mother tongue.

Munshi Zaka Ullah was an enthusiast in these vernacular educational ideals. He had himself learnt science and mathematics through the medium of Urdu, as Professor Ramchandra had taught them, and he did not see why his children should not do the same. It is true that he had learnt the new knowledge chiefly from lectures, given by word of mouth in the vernacular: he had not studied from text books at all. But he was quite certain that such text books could be written, and he was prepared to write them. His offer was accepted. It would have been difficult, at that time, in the whole of the North of India, to have discovered anyone more fitted for the task. Certainly it would have been impossible to have found a teacher with such a contagious enthusiasm and such tireless industry.

Having once undertaken the task, he gave up to it all his spare moments. He laboured at it with a strenuous energy, that would have exhausted one with less mental and bodily vigour and less dominant power of will.

His first publisher was found in the Aligarh

Institute. The pioneer enterprise of this Institution, in venturing upon this great vernacular work, is worthy of being recorded. From its press, volume after volume in Urdu was issued on chemistry, physics, light, heat, and other scientific subjects, as well as elementary and advanced works on mathematics.

There is an interesting letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, which is still in the possession of Munshi Zaka Ullah's family. It shows the mind of the Government of India at that time on this vexed question of vernacular education. It runs as follows :—

“It appears from replies received by Government, that little or nothing has yet been done in translating works of modern science into the vernacular of India. What has been done in Urdu has been chiefly effected through the instrumentality of the Aligarh Institute. The series of mathematical works, published by Munshi Zaka Ullah, of Delhi, which is highly spoken of by the Director of Public Instruction, N.W.P., is believed to have been commenced at the request and with the assistance of the Aligarh Institute. Munshi Zaka Ullah has evidently done his work in an excellent manner, and it is hoped that with some further acknowledgment and aid he may agree to carry out the undertaking and direct his attention to other branches of knowledge. The Governor-General in Council is of the opinion, that, with further assistance, some means may be devised for further stimulating the production of similar works.”

The Governor-General referred to in this letter was Lord Northbrook. It was a somewhat tardy and half-hearted recognition of an immense amount of work already accomplished. Its closing sentence was fully justified by the event. For Munshi Zaka Ullah went steadily on with the difficult undertaking, which he had

begun; and each fresh year saw some new book published, which had come from his pen.

The full record of his achievement appears almost incredible, until the number of years that he spent over the task is taken into account. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that he spent, in all, nearly fifty years of his life in this one literary pursuit.

He soon abandoned the mere verbal translation of English books, and launched out into writings that were either wholly, or in part, original. At the close of his career, when I had become his intimate friend, he would show me rows of volumes which he had written. I have still with me many of his chief works which he presented to me. They are full of original information, written in a simple and fluent Urdu style. They cover a great variety of subjects. Their publication and their use in schools have done not a little to set a standard for Urdu literature; to make it lucid and clear and easy to follow for the ordinary reader, and to free it from an over-growth of Persian and Arabic words, which none but the learned understand.

As a Professor of Vernacular Learning and Science at the Muir Central College, Allahabad, he was able to carry on, in an almost uninterrupted manner, the work of preparing these text books. He won, at the same time, the highest esteem and reverence from all his pupils. On his departure from Allahabad his old pupils presented him with an address, which in this instance was no formal matter, but a spontaneous act marked by deep sincerity and affection. "Your kindly and just treatment," the address runs, in one of its paragraphs, "your sympathy with them

and your complete identification with everything that concerns their moral and intellectual welfare, will long be remembered. Both as a teacher and as a true friend and guide, we have had at all times full confidence in you, and were convinced that you would do your utmost for us and promote our best interests. We feel that the severance of your connection with our College will form a serious loss to us all."

The honours that were showered upon him on his retirement from active teaching work came as a surprise to him, as he told me modestly, and he thought that he had not deserved them; but the public felt very differently, and there was a general satisfaction at the recognition of his massive learning and ability. He had worked very hard indeed at his various duties. His educational experiments were new and untried: he had to create new traditions. At every turn he was called upon to act as a pioneer. The course he took was not the one to win him popularity: but from the point of view of educational principle it was preeminently sound. That it did not succeed better was due to the fact that the generation of students in which his own lot was cast desired to learn English at any cost. They threw away their mother tongue and their own literature in order to achieve the knowledge of English more quickly. To-day the pendulum is at last swinging back. The great work of Munshi Zaka Ullah will soon come to its own and be appreciated at its proper worth.

His retirement after thirty-seven years of service at Allahabad was in no sense a retreat to a life of inactivity or idle leisure. Indeed, his

best literary work was done in his later days. He was an indefatigable reader, as well as writer, and in a wonderful way he kept abreast of the information of the times in which he lived in, both at home and abroad. He took up somewhat late in life, with his usual energy and industry, the study of modern history. Some of his most original work was done in this field. He had a purpose at the back of all this earnest historical study. It was his one wish to show, that in India tolerance of religious opinion is the first and last principle of good government. His ideal rulers, whether in Hindu, Moghul, or British times, were those that loved and practised tolerance and bound together the divided peoples into one, instead of separating them by religious and racial narrowness, bigotry and pride.

In his *Victoria Namah* the theme of his book is the advent of the British rule. As we read it, we recognise the enthusiastic hopes which were held at that period by the best men of the age, who had not yet realised the inherent weakness of a distant government, which must inevitably remain apart and can never possibly be assimilated simply because of that distance.

The old Moghul order, he felt, had decayed: a new order had begun, a rule of peace and settlement such as India had not known since the days of Akbar the Great. Religious tolerance and enlightened administration had come once more to India under British rule, and gratitude was due above all to the great and good Queen Victoria, to whom his own heart's loyalty was given.

It was during this time of his greatest literary activity that his work for his own Musalman

community had also daily claimed his earnest attention. His eyes used to light up with eager enthusiasm at the mention of the name of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of Aligarh. There could be no question who was Munshi Zaka Ullah's greatest living hero; it was Sir Syed Ahmad. Sir Syed's portrait had the central place of honour in his own sitting room. Books relating to Sir Syed, or else written by him, were conspicuous on his shelves, and constantly in his hands. He used, at all times, to speak about him with the greatest reverence and admiration. He would give me his lectures to read, and ask my opinion about them, saying that to him they seemed to point out clearly the one true pathway of development for Musalmans in India.

From all this it can be understood that Zaka Ullah became in process of time an ardent supporter of the Aligarh Movement, even though it did not fully represent his position with regard to vernacular teaching. He was on the board of directors from its foundation, and remained on it up to the day of his death. Indeed, it was on Aligarh, and what it stood for, that he himself, along with all the Musalman idealists of the North of India, based his hopes. This was, of all modern intellectual movements in India, the one that was nearest to his heart.

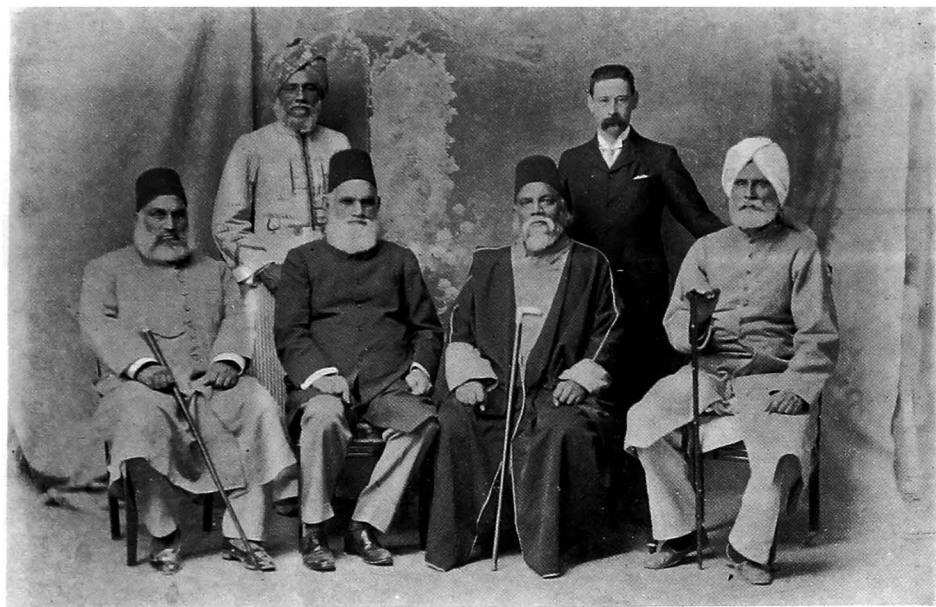
At a very grave crisis in the Aligarh College history, Zaka Ullah came to me early one morning in Delhi, along with his friend, Nazir Ahmad, in order to ask me to go down with them by the next train to Aligarh to help them with regard to some serious difficulties which had arisen between the English professors and the Musalman students. The situation was a very delicate

one, and I had grave fears that I might rather hinder than help in such a matter; but his intense anxiety overcame my fears. "The hopes of my whole life time," he said to me, "are centred in that College. If evil comes to it, the work of my life is ruined." His overpowering emotion as he spoke showed how deeply he felt it all, and therefore I went with him.

That journey showed me, more clearly than anything had done before, the passionate earnestness of his convictions and ideals about Aligarh. He was ready to go to any length of personal sacrifice, and even indignity, if only the work of Sir Syed Ahmad could be left intact. When we reached Aligarh, the two old men laboured with pathetic earnestness to compose the differences that had arisen. They went to every length possible in the way of entreaty while dealing with the recalcitrant students. "This College," they said to me, "is the darling of our hearts, the light of our eyes. We could never forgive ourselves if anything happened to it which we might have been able to prevent."

One of the most interesting features in Munshi Zaka Ullah's whole disposition was his attitude towards the modernising of Indian education. He was one of the few men who accepted wholeheartedly the need for a modern outlook; especially he demanded the teaching of modern science to the fullest extent; but at the same time he insisted that the medium of instruction should be the child's own vernacular language, not English. Though himself remaining to the end true to these great principles, as an Urdu teacher and writer, teaching his own students through the medium of Urdu, he recognised to





THE LEADERS OF THE ALIGARH MOVEMENT.

MAULANA SHIBLI.

SIR THOMAS ARNOLD.

NAWAB VIQAR-UL-MULK. NAWAR MUHSIN-UL-MULK.

DR. NAZIR AHMAD.

MAULVI ALTAF HUSAIN.

the full from the very first, owing to his own educational experience at the Old Delhi College, that without a full acceptance of the results of modern science and a full knowledge of them also, the East must inevitably fall behind West, and the door of all future progress be closed.

With the same principles in view—and it stands greatly to his credit—he was one of the very earliest pioneers of female education in the North of India, at a time when the very idea of such thing was foreign and outlandish to the general mind of the people. As time went on, he used to point to Japan as a signal example of the success of what he called the vernacular method. "The constant use of English," he used to say, "even from our childhood, so that we begin to express our thoughts in it instead of in our mother tongue, will go far to denationalise us. If we wish to remain an Eastern people, we must not neglect the language which we learnt at our mother's knee. We must not become foreigners to our own population and practically to all our women folk. Our mother tongue contains for us all our hallowed memories and traditions: it is our first articulate speech which we employ while talking with our mothers when we are young. To forget it, or to despise it, is to lose one of the strongest factors in the building up of national character."

"For us, Musalmans," he would continue, "the Urdu language has intimate associations with our religion. Its script reminds us of our sacred language, Arabic: very many of its words are sprung from Arabic roots. To abandon Urdu for English; to bring up Musalman children, so that they do not know how to write or read

fluently in Urdu, but prefer to write in English, is the surest way to bring about the neglect of the Muhammadan religion. For who, in the North of India, except a few scholars, will love the study of Arabic,—the language of our sacred Quran,—if the Urdu language is despised, owing to the present extreme fascination for progress in English?"

While holding these convictions right up to the end, and regarding them as unanswerable in principle, Zaka Ullah at the close of his long life acknowledged sadly that in practice the whole trend of events had hitherto gone against him. When he saw this with open eyes, and realised that, whether he would or not, the study of English as a primary and not as a secondary language, must come in, he accepted the new situation at Aligarh and elsewhere. He did not merely stand on one side, but put himself in the forefront of the battle for the advancement of modern scientific knowledge. He did not side with the reactionaries. He remained the whole-hearted admirer and supporter of Sir Syed Admad Khan and the Aligarh Movement, even when, much against his own idea of education, it was frankly placed upon an "English" basis. At the same time he did all he could to preserve whatever remained on the Oriental side, and to encourage the pure study of Urdu literature in the College itself. In this he was partly successful; but in his main effort, he failed.

Nevertheless, though he was humble, recognising his own limitations; though he knew himself, as never before, to be a follower not a leader; a man who could carry out the ideas of others, not

forcefully, with the whole weight of personality, impress on the world his own, yet it was always with a certain tone of regret that he bowed to the inevitable when it came. He knew in his hearts of hearts that the inferior educational course had been taken, not the best.

Sometimes, in moments of despondency, during his later years, he would tell me how he felt that his own life work of Urdu adaptation and translation, for the use of schools, had been altogether wasted. He would blame himself and say: "If I had been born with the genius for Urdu Prose of Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, I might have succeeded: but I have failed through incompetence."

Then he would point to the number of volumes he had written, which were lying idle on the shelves, with no one to take them down and read them. He would say that they would only moulder into dust, and his name and his effort would be forgotten: the tide had gone against him, and he had not been able to turn it back in the other direction.

In reply, I would urge that to be a pioneer in a great movement was a nobler task than to help forward that which had already made its way, and that he might rightly receive the genuine credit of posterity for having been one of the very first to give the impetus to the spread of the new learning, at whatever cost, in the north of India, and that all his Urdu books had been written with that ideal in view.

But though this was all true, it never really satisfied him. I think he felt that with only a little more insistence at the first on Urdu as a medium he might have carried his main point.

If he had possessed the volcanic personality of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, or even of his life-long friend and companion, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, he might perhaps at last have won the victory for what he knew, in his heart of hearts, to be the truth of modern education. He could see, before he died, the very evils creeping into the whole system of Indian teaching against which he had struggled so hard and yet without any success. Sometimes he wondered whether the whole of his massive effort had not been premature, and whether more time should not have been taken and surer foundations laid, before the house was built.

Thus Munshi Zaka Ullah, in his educational work, was a remarkable combination of the past and of the present. He was a man, who himself refused to speak in any language but Urdu, if he could possibly help it. Yet he read fluently, and with great ease, the most difficult books in English. He kept himself abreast of all that had been written in that language on his own subjects, and translated his fresh learning into Urdu. He had also a working knowledge of modern European history which was rarely at fault. He was one who clung tenaciously to his own vernacular and encouraged it to the utmost of his power; but at the same time he accepted the spread of English as a medium of school teaching, when he saw that the current of public opinion was against him. He revered the Islamic past, with its great traditions of Arabic and Persian poetry and learning; yet he was the first to recognise the urgent necessity for progressive Islam to assimilate modern science and modern technical knowledge. He took infinite pride in the great achievements of Indian civilisation,

stretching as it did back to the times of the Vedas and Upanishads, and studied the early history of his motherland with earnest enthusiasm, yet he was the first to admit the degeneracy and decay that had taken place, and the need of a fresh current of air from outside such as came with the "English Peace." He was old-fashioned to the end, in his mode of life, his household arrangements, his dress, his outward conduct and deportment; yet he was most eager to discuss the latest scientific discoveries and to accept their conclusions.

His life, as he lived it, was true to his own educational ideal. It had a greatness of its own which differed in tone and quality on the one hand from the English educated Musalman, and on the other hand from the Muslim who had stood entirely aloof from the modern world of the new learning. He possessed the liberality of the former and the old-world refinement of the latter. His life itself was all of one piece. Every one who met him could feel that he had kept his own soul. He had not lost it in an artificial attempt to master another culture before he had been fully grounded in his own.

What he had accomplished in his own life and had worked out in his own experience he was anxious to impart to others; the dangers that he had been saved from in his own career he wished to guard others against in turn. The pity was, that with all his other gifts, he had not the greatest gift of all that is needed in a pioneer, namely, the force of vital, dynamic personality that could drive the conviction home to the minds of others and make them understand its burning importance. He had all the "sweetness

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and light" that were needed, but he was not a "Son of Thunder." Perhaps, if he had been, we who knew him, and deeply revered and greatly loved him, would have found him less attractive; for it was the very gentleness of his goodness that made its peculiar charm.

## CHAPTER X

### POLITICAL IDEAS

DURING the closing years of his life, Munshi Zaka Ullah became one of the most sincerely loved figures in society in the city of Delhi. He served faithfully and regularly on many committees, and took his place on every occasion in public when the leading citizens were represented. He was honoured as a public leader by the Hindus and Musalmans alike. Any doubts which had been held by the latter concerning his own faith in Islam in earlier days had for the most part passed away, and he was regarded with natural pride by Delhi Musalmans as an ornament of the religion he professed.

Until the time of his last long illness he could be seen every afternoon in the Public Library in the Queen's Gardens reading the latest books and reviews. It was there, as I have mentioned earlier, that I first came to know him as a friend; therefore that reading room will always, to me, be associated with his memory. He used to occupy a favourite chair near a sunny window during the cold weather, and during the hot weather he would come after sunset and sit on the roof of the library in the cool evening air, and there we would hold our discussions, while he sat with a smile on his face that responded to the eagerness of my attempts to gain him to my own opinion.

It would have been difficult to find in the North



of India a more distinguished intellectual circle than those courtly old men who used to gather round him each evening in the library. There were members of all creeds present, and as long as that circle remained intact it was always possible, if any controversy arose in the city, or any outbreak of mob violence was feared, to reach a liberal understanding on any points under dispute. On different occasions, within my own recollection, this restoration of peace in times of excitement was accomplished by their aid.

What attracted me first of all and drew me into the circle was the extraordinary kindness and cordiality of Munshi Zaka Ullah himself. He seemed to have a winning power of attraction which overcame my own painful diffidence. More than anyone else he was able to reveal to me the heart of India and to express the greatness of the history of the Indian people. He was, in a sense, its embodiment, making it visible and concrete to me, just at a time when I was most anxious to learn. Thus it was not merely an attraction towards the dignity and greatness of Islam that I felt, though his presence helped me much in that direction also. It was rather a respect and reverence for India as a whole—its majestic tradition, its ancient poetry and romance, its eastern colour and atmosphere, so different from the West. The great and wonderful buildings of Old Delhi, which were close at hand, added to the fascination of those days.

From his side, the West was deeply appreciated in his ideal; and here was one point of contact. He did not stand too far away from me. He never despised or underrated the culture and the

spirituality of the West. At the same time, he gave me, through my intercourse with him, a true and living appreciation of the ancient civilisation and wisdom of the East.

In Calcutta, and in other Indian cities, I have found the same atmosphere of refinement and culture again and again; but I have never felt the old world of India blending with the new so impressively as I have done when talking with my old Musalman friend in Delhi.

Later on, when the national movement, in India, with which I was in whole-hearted sympathy, began to develop in the North, it became my custom to write articles in English for the different periodicals. Munshi Zaka Ullah, as I have related, was an omnivorous reader; and partly on account of our friendship with each other and partly because of his interest in modern subjects, he would make a point of reading any article of mine with special care whenever it appeared. He would wait for me afterwards in the library, eager to discuss the new subject with me. Usually he was both critical and conservative at the same time; and he would warn me against impetuous haste in reaching my own conclusions. Then he would suggest and sketch out for me some further subject, on which I might possibly write, and give me an outline of the main points in it which he would wish me to discuss.

Munshi Zaka Ullah's mind was wonderfully alert right up to the end of his long life. I was continually impressed by the wide range of his information and the breadth of his point of view on all the religious and social questions which we considered together. As an historian

and an author, our English politics had a special interest for him; and many of our talks were about my own country and its more recent political developments.

This was partly due to the fact that he had been called upon to write text-books in Urdu, both on English and Indian history. The study he had made of the nineteenth century in England had absorbed him. He always came back to the conclusion I have mentioned, that Mr. Gladstone was the greatest statesman of the century. For his character as a man he had an unbounded admiration. On one occasion, which I remember very well, he said to me:—"When you get a deep and sincere religious nature combined with a strong intellect and a high sense of moral justice, and the man who possesses these great gifts rises to become Prime Minister of a country, it is the highest gift that God can bestow on any nation. Politics divorced from religion is altogether evil."

He found it very difficult to fathom the ideas underlying Socialism, and he very often asked me questions about them. But, whenever I tried to explain them, he would shake his head and tell me that he could not appreciate them at all. Every country, he would affirm, needed a king or ruler. No country could rule itself for any length of time merely by a system, however complete that system might be in theory. The personal ruler was always the chief need, much more than the correct system. When the true personal ruler was found, and the people were ready to obey his will, then good government might be achieved. Without strong personal rule, good government was, he thought,

impossible. Socialism he regarded as eliminating this profound personal element in life and inculcating a dead system in its place. This point of view was interesting, but I felt that fundamentally he could not grasp the subject, because his mind was so entirely wrapped up in the concept of loyalty to a king as the one political ideal. It was a long inherited tradition, from which it was impossible for his very active and alert mind to disengage itself.

The rise of the Labour Party interested him most of all during the closing years of his life, and he was never tired of speaking about it. He knew that I had been very closely attached to the Labour movement in England, and this added to his great interest. "You are an extraordinary people," he would say to me; "you take those who are in the dust, and set them among princes. Of course, if you can ensure the right people coming into power by this method, you will have proved the wisdom of your politics. Our<sup>3</sup> Emperors used to do much the same thing in the past, when they chose their Grand Viziers from the lowest ranks of society, and even from among slaves. But then they could also depose them at a single word. What will you do when the Labour Party comes into power and oppresses those who are noble by intellect and birth? You cannot then depose the Labour Prime Minister at a glance, as our Emperors could depose their Grand Viziers. Yet, if they go on and make mistakes they may do infinite mischief."

I would try to explain to him, as far as I could, that nowadays, since education was compulsory and universal, times were altogether changed.

It was very often found, by experience, that much the most brilliant intellect and truest nobility came out of families that would never have had a chance of rising in the olden days. I also tried to prove to him the strong moral trend which the Labour Party had already given to modern politics. He listened to all that I had to say, but he had grave fears about the future. What struck me so much was this, that he felt for the destiny of my country as if it had been his own.

In Indian political affairs he was instinctively and constitutionally a conservative. Indeed, conservatism was his traditional inheritance, while his intellect made him progressive. Not only was his own nature drawing him strongly towards a conservative attitude, but his own tragic experience of the Mutiny had influenced him also in the same direction. He had witnessed at that time the wild passions let loose on either side; and therefore his mind was very steadily set against change when it clearly endangered the public peace.

The National movement in India interested him very powerfully indeed; for he was a true lover of his country. But he drew back in horror when he saw anything approaching to violence; and he spoke with anguish concerning certain recent acts of assassination. "Can such people," he cried, "believe in God?"

It was to education, first and last, that he looked for all true political and social advance in the near future. On this theme he never grew tired; it was always uppermost in his mind. The backwardness in education of his own Muhammadan community was a great distress

to him, and he felt that his whole life must be given to remove it.

"Without true learning," he would say to me, "there can be no solid and lasting foundation. You may build your house, and at the first all will appear to be going on well, but before long your building will tumble into ruins because the foundation of learning and culture is lacking. Some new superstition will arise; some new popular clamour will spring up; and then suddenly the whole edifice, which you have been slowly erecting, will come toppling down to the ground."

Once he said to me, with startling force and earnestness: "Remember, in my young days, I had to pass through the Mutiny. Would the Mutiny ever have taken place at all if there had been universal education? What was it that the mutineers fed themselves with, and fed the common people with also, both Hindu and Musalman alike? Superstition, blind superstition! A little knowledge might have dispelled it; but the knowledge was not there."

This was one of the few occasions when he referred of his own accord to the Mutiny, and it was all the more impressive on that account.

When I suggested that universal education was above all desirable, because it would be certain to make Indians wish to govern themselves, instead of being governed by others, he somewhat half-heartedly agreed.

"It may end thus," he acknowledged; "but that will never be in your time or in mine. After all, the main question is, not who governs the masses of poor people, but whether the masses are governed well."

"But," I said quickly, "good government can never be a substitute for self-government."

This did not seem convincing to him. "Was not," he asked, "India far happier in the days of a ruler like Akbar the Great than when it was divided into a thousand hostile factions before he came? India is not a tiny area like England, but a continent containing one-fifth of the world's population. I would certainly wish to have India self-governing; but India can only reach that goal by the constant practice of religious toleration."

In saying things like these he could not be mistaken for a moment for an opportunist. His patriotism was always aflame, and his love of India intense; but he had studied the internal problem of his own country with a sincerity that made it impossible for him to shirk any of the salient facts. His conservatism also made him constitutionally unwilling to face the thought of violent upheaval.

Munshi Zaka Ullah's opinions on one point were very strong indeed. He objected vehemently to Musalmans, whose forefathers had been in India for many generations, regarding themselves as foreigners, or making a line of separation between their own interests, as Musalmans, and the interests of India itself. No subject roused him to indignant protest more than this.

"India," he said to me, with impassioned accents that I can still recall, "India is our own mother country, the country which gave us birth. We have made our homes here, married here, begotten children here; and here on this soil of India we have buried our sacred dead.

India, therefore, must needs be dearer to us than any other country upon earth. We should love this very soil of India, which is mingled with the dust of our ancestors. For a thousand years, our own religion of Islam has been intimately bound up with India; and in India, Islam has won some of the greatest triumphs for its own peculiar form of civilisation. We should love, therefore, the history and government of India, which have been shaped by such great monarchs as Akbar the Great and his successors. I cannot bear to hear Indian Musalmans speaking without reverence and affection for India. It is a new fashion, unfortunately springing up, which did not exist in my younger days. The fashion is a bad one, and should not be encouraged. By all means let us love our Musalman brethren in other countries, and feel their joys and sorrows; but let us love with all our hearts our own country and have nothing to do with the encouragement of those who tell us, that we, Musalmans, must always be looking outside India for our religious hopes and their fulfilment."

There were few subjects on which Munshi Zaka Ullah in his old age became more eloquent than this, and he never was diverted for a moment from this position throughout the whole of his long life. His heart was bound up with India, and it was India's history which he studied with the devotion of a lover. His nature was rooted like a tree in Indian soil, and no storm or tempest from outside could ever shake it.

His son, Inayat Ullah, told me once, that he had gone to his father and had asked his permission to study the history of Spain, in order to learn about the greatness of Islamic rule in that



country. His father had replied to him: "Why should you begin to study the history of Spain, before you have mastered the history of your own country? Is not the Islamic civilisation in India great enough for you to study? Was there ever in the history of the world a greater Muhammadan Empire than that of the House of Timur, with Baber and Akbar and Shah Jehan as its monarchs? Study that first. Learn to love your own country truly and thoughtfully. Only then will you be able to appreciate the history of others."

Indian history, Indian poetry, Indian art, Indian music, were all great in his eyes; and he made no line of distinction between what was Hindu and what came from Islam. He was proud of every achievement and cherished it all as his own.

I come now to the point where my own views tended to diverge from his. I will state this as simply as I possibly can, though it brought us into intellectual opposition, and neither of us were ready to change our opinions. He had ardent hopes that owing to the spread of education and the growing enlightenment of the common people, the relations between Hindus and Musalmans would be greatly improved. At the same time, he could look forward to no period (and here I differed from him) when the mediating influence of a third and neutral factor, such as the English, would be rendered unnecessary. He therefore regarded the place of the English in India as a permanent, and not a temporary factor.

Never for one moment did I find him waver with regard to this position, however much I might press him in argument, expecting him to

give way. For he somehow regarded it as an inevitable inference from all his reading of Indian history. "Believe me," he would say to me, with very great earnestness, "believe me, I know India from my babyhood, in a way you can never know it; for I was born here, and I have always lived here, while you only came out here when you were middle-aged. As you are aware, I love India with the love of a son for his own mother. I know also my own people. I know the Musalman community. At the same time, I have close friends, as you are aware, among the Hindus, and I respect them as my fellow countrymen. But I am sure of one thing, and have become more certain of it the longer I have lived; the difference between Hindu and Musalman is too great for any permanent union; and we shall always have the need of a balancing power. That was why, in God's providence, the English had to come in as rulers when the Moghul power declined."

"But suppose," I said, "that education should be universal and compulsory, and both communities were taught at the same schools and read the same books, would not the present ignorance and superstition with regard to religious differences vanish, as it has already practically vanished between Roman Catholic and Protestant in England? We have no intervening power in our own country. Does not the presence of an intervening power in India only stir up greater strife? Have not the two communities got to learn to settle their own differences, without the interference of an outside party?"

The old man would shake his head and say

to me: "You younger men may have such expectations; perhaps we dreamt dreams ourselves, also, when we were young. But experience is a stern schoolmaster, teaching us as we grow older hard lessons that cannot be forgotten; and my own experience has shown me that there is a place for the English in India, just in the same way as there is a place for the Musalmans and a place for the Hindus. You have one destiny to fulfil in India: we Musalmans have another destiny to fulfil: and the Hindus have a different destiny of their own. India is large enough and great enough for Hindu, Musalman and Christian. There is no need whatever for the English always to be in the position of rulers; but all three are needed. All three have their destiny in this country."

"What destiny do you mean?" I would ask.

"Our functions are not the same," he would answer. "The country can only have peace by utilising all three. Look at Indian history, which you know has been my special study. First of all, in India, there was the Hindu only: and for a time there was great peace and civilisation. But then at last followed dissolution and decay. Next God sent the Musalman. First of all, there was bloodshed and fighting. Then followed another era of great peace and civilisation; then in turn came dissolution and decay. After that, God sent the English. Once more there was bloodshed and fighting. And now in turn there has come great peace and civilisation. It may be that your power, in turn, will decay and dissolve; but even then your work in India will remain. For just as we Musalmans have grown to be a part of India, so also may you. It

is all within the will of God. He does as He pleases."

"What are the dangers," I asked, "to the present peace and civilisation?"

"First of all," he replied, "you, who are English, may cease to make your own interests coincide with those of India. You may try to use India entirely for selfish ends. You may say in your hearts: 'I can do wickedness, but God will not see it.' But if ever you cease to be humble before Him, believe me, your fall will be greatest of all. Then, the second danger is that the Musalman should say in his heart: 'India belongs only to us. We shall make the Hindu again obey us, as in the past.' If we, Musalmans, ever attempt this in our arrogance, we shall surely fall. The third and last danger is that the Hindu should say: 'We have the numbers, wealth and knowledge. We are more numerous than the sands of the sea. Let us drive out the Musalman and the Christian alike, and keep the country to ourselves.' All these voices are merely the boastings of pride. They do not recognise our common humanity. They do not acknowledge the will of God, working out His divine purpose in the world."

I have tried, as nearly as I could, to reproduce some of these conversations. They made a deep impression on me at the time: but the impression was due more to the spirit of intense earnestness with which he spoke than to any special originality in the thoughts that he uttered. Up to the last we agreed to differ in our political views, and no word of harsh controversy arose between us. He was never able to convince me on this point, nor was I myself able to convince

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him. It must be remembered that all this happened more than twenty years ago.

When I asked him one day what he regarded as the one thing of greatest importance in India at the present time, he replied without any hesitation, "Religious Toleration." The answer was unexpected, and it struck me very much indeed. I had fully expected him to say "Education," but his answer was more striking than that.

## CHAPTER XI

### OLD AGE

THERE was one subject which constantly came up in our talks together, and revealed a unique trait in Munshi Zaka Ullah's character, it was his almost boundless admiration for Queen Victoria as a woman and a queen. It reminded me of nothing so much as one of those old-world loyalties towards a royal family which in English history have been associated with the House of Stuart, and in France with the House of Bourbon. But it was strange indeed to me to discover, out in India, such a form of loyalty towards a foreign sovereign, who had never visited India at all, and whom, therefore, Zaka Ullah had naturally never seen.

As I learnt to know him better, I felt that by tradition and inheritance, going back (as he himself would say) for seventy generations, devotion to a sovereign was in the blood. It was not a mere question of expediency, or interest, but rather an expression of his most deep-rooted instincts. It represented his own normal attitude towards human life. Without loyalty to a sovereign his nature evidently missed its proper nourishment. It was of impressive interest to me to watch this strange phenomenon—this exotic form of loyalty—which yet developed so healthily and well in its new soil.

He told me that he had learnt to look upon the imperial house of Victoria as continuing the traditions and the glories of the great house of Timur, from which Akbar the Great was sprung.

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The loyalty of his family, for all those past generations, to the latter house, had now been transferred to the former. That is how he tried to explain it to me, and I have used the very words he employed. He related to me further, that the Moghul Court, great as it had been in its glories and traditions of old, had fallen into hopeless decay. None knew better than himself how deep down that decay had reached: for he had lived through it all in his youth. There was, therefore, needed a new line of descent, more worthy of rule, because endowed by Providence with different qualities, such as were essentially requisite in the new era of enlightenment, which had come to India in the nineteenth century. The change of dynasty was a necessary step in Indian history, as fixed and ordained by God as the change of dynasty which came with Akba the Great.

There were two factors, which, as I talked longer with him, I could see had made this transference of loyalty from one royal house to the other easier and more natural than it would otherwise have been.

First of all, he regarded it as historically certain that his own country had entered on a new era. He accepted the enlightenment which had come from the West as sent by God; therefore, he welcomed it with all his heart. None of his outward manners and customs had been changed, and he remained outwardly the most conservative man in Delhi. His dress, his habits, his domestic life, his religious life—all that he valued most dearly—remained unalterably eastern. Yet one thing was undoubtedly changed—his mind. He had frankly accepted

western science and a great deal of western thought. He recognised that a new age had come, the age of the West; therein he was a learner. But just when this stupendous change in mental outlook had come to India, he recognised that the effete Moghul dynasty was not capable of ushering it in successfully; therefore a change of dynasty was natural, and the new dynasty should come from the West. In all his historical work he found it simple to divide the periods of Indian history by three names—Asoka, Akbar, Victoria. The one supreme factor which united them all was the proclamation of religious toleration.

But when I came more deeply to understand the working of his mind, I found a second factor equally important with him, namely, the character of Queen Victoria. For that character, as I have said, he had an almost boundless admiration, which was mixed with chivalrous feeling. It must be remembered that the passions of the soldiery which had been let loose at the close of the Mutiny after the capture of Delhi, had inexpressibly shocked him. The vengeance had fallen chiefly on the innocent, and it had been cruel beyond description. I have described how, for a time, his own faith in the new enlightenment, which had come to India from the West, had been shaken to its foundations. His family had suffered almost the worst form of punishment possible, though it had taken no part in the struggle. The one, who had been most of all to him as an inspiring teacher in early life, Maulvi Imam Baksh, an old man entirely innocent, had been cruelly murdered. The evil that had been done in those evil days of vengeance,

when the soldiery were beyond all control, came close to his own door and touched those who were nearest and dearest to him. As a consequence, for a time he had nearly lost all hope. The way in which he avoided this subject, even in conversation with me, and the evident horror it had for him, were far more eloquent than words.

But Queen Victoria, he believed, had intervened at that most critical moment. This was his consolation. The Queen had put a stop, by her own command, to these terrible reprisals, and in their place she had written and signed with her own hand the proclamation of religious liberty and racial equality which was to him, in the fullest sense, the Magna Charta of Indian freedom, and the beginning of a new age.

Therefore, even though the iron had entered deep into his soul, it had not entered too deep to be removed—the wound was healed by the Queen's own gracious act; and for this reason, among others, his loyalty to her person was profound. Thus it was intellectually reasoned out, and not merely a blind loyalty without reason. There was a consciousness about it of a supreme moral gain.

Added to all this, as the years went by, there was yet another more personal factor, about which he spoke to me in very moving terms. "I was at one time," he said to me, "reduced to utter poverty. Our family was very nearly ruined. My mother had to sell her jewels in order to buy books for my college courses. The Moghul Court was in utter decay, and my family, that had served it so faithfully for many generations, was brought to destitution. At one time we were very near to starvation. But now,

to-day, on account of the knowledge which I have received from the West, and because of my employment as a teacher, our family has again become honoured and prosperous. We have more of this world's goods than we need for ourselves, and we are able to give to others who have greater need. It is the royal house of Victoria that has thus raised my family to its former state of dignity and affluence. Why then should I not be more than grateful to her for her kindness."

There was a simplicity in all this, when he said it to me, which made it abundantly clear that he was speaking from his heart, and was not merely trying to please me with his words. Indeed, he regarded me rather as in need of being convinced; for I had very often spoken to him of the evils that I saw to be inherent in foreign rule; and I had put forward very strongly the idea, that India should govern herself independently, and not be tied any longer by the strings of a government many thousands of miles away. This anomaly of the foreign and distant administration had always seemed to me to be preposterous; and my intimacy with Munshi Zaka Ullah was such that I freely confided to him all my thought.

It was this perfect frankness between us that he most valued. But I could not convince him. He would allow my argument in theory to be sound; but in practice, he would urge, it has not proved itself yet to be true. The British rule was still needed more than ever to keep religious peace. It must be remembered that all this happened twenty years ago, and I cannot tell what he would have said if he had been living to-day.

Naturally, I often spoke with the old man about his own Musalman community, and here I touched on a subject that was specially dear to him. For his intense love for India made him not less, but more devoted to his own religion. Night and day he worked and studied, planned and thought, for the good of Islam. The progress in India of the Musalman community was the strongest incentive at the back of all his arduous labours, and it influenced his whole life more than any other single cause. For over fifty years his toil was incessant, as he tried to set forth, in the Urdu vernacular, the new learning upon which he believed the progress of his own Islamic community to depend.

The early scenes of the Mutiny, he told me, came as a terrible shock. He had no idea at all, or any warning of its approach, and it took him completely by surprise. When it came, he saw his own people failing hopelessly, through ignorance and prejudice and religious bigotry, to distinguish right from wrong. They committed deeds of violence that were cruel and unnatural in a peaceful country like India. All this had filled him with dismay, and he had not known where to turn at that time.

Yet something worse followed, something usually passed over too lightly in English records, but almost unforgettable by Indians. For the closing scenes of the Mutiny were the most terrible of all, and the most barbarous. "I had thought," he said to me, "up till then, that the English people were angels. But during those terrible days, after Delhi had fallen, for a short period, I thought they were devils, such horrible things happened."

When the crisis of depression was over he went back to his work after the Mutiny with a deeper knowledge of mankind. He saw that he had been too blindly relying on mere goodwill and the assumed magnanimity of the English. He had thought too little of the need of self-reliance and self-support.

Then the same thought flashed upon him that stirred also to immediate action Sir Syed Ahmad. The Musalmans must be pensioners no longer; they must be up and doing; they must work out their own salvation. To fall back on others was full of danger, and also lacking in human self-respect and dignity. The old-world bigotry, ignorance and fanaticism must be dispelled; but Musalmans themselves must do the work.

The Mutiny, Munshi Zaka Ullah told me, had been the greatest blow, for the time being, that his own Musalman community in India had ever experienced. The suspicions of the British Government had fallen chiefly upon them, and every Muslim in the North of India was under a cloud; thus they were put back in their own acquisition of the new learning for nearly a generation, just at a time when it was of vital importance for them to go forward. They became the one backward community in India—illiterate, hopelessly ignorant—and at the same time steeped in prejudice and distrust.

As a consequence of this, a despondency within the Islamic faith itself, sometimes amounting to sullen despair, had taken hold of the Musalmans of the North of India. This despondency at one time had been the greatest danger of all. They resented bitterly the atmosphere of suspicion in which they continually lived; and yet this

very resentment added fuel to the fire. They began to hate the English and the English ways. A large number of those who had before belonged to flourishing families under Moghul rule, and had been used to exercise authority, were reduced to beggary and squalor. Property had been sold at ruinous rates, during the time of depression; and afterwards when the tide turned and the prosperity of the country began to come back, their fortunes at first did not revive with it. They saw those who had been their servants now becoming their masters. Destiny seemed to be against them, crushing them down. No hand was held out to help them. The younger sons of the noble Muslim families remained inactive, merely lingering idly about the house, uneducated, untidy, sometimes even in tatters, without the least desire to improve their own position, having lost altogether the very spirit of progress. The low estate into which some of them had fallen could scarcely be credited. Men and women of noble blood, nay, even of the royal family itself, had been obliged to serve in menial occupations in order to avoid starvation. The whole of the North of India was scattered over with such families in decay.

Only very slowly indeed had the spirit and courage at the heart of the Muslim faith, throughout the provinces affected by the Mutiny, been restored. Those who were educated and enlightened, and had actually stretched out a hand to help, were looked upon in the first instance with strange suspicion and distrust. Bitter prejudice was raised against them, and the smouldering fires of religious bigotry were fanned into a flame. The one remedy which those who

had come forward proposed—the acceptance of the new learning—was denounced on all sides by the reactionaries as contrary to the religion of Islam. The cries of “Kafir,” “Infidel,” “Atheist” were bandied about unceasingly, and all the forces of unenlightenment, bigotry, and superstition were brought to bear against the innovators.

But in the darkest hour a marvellous personality had arisen. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who would have been a commanding figure and a born leader of men in any country and at any period in history, at that critical moment came to the front of the battle and led the whole fight against bigotry and darkness. The battle had been won. Sir Syed Ahmed at last became loved instead of hated. The character of the new education was vindicated and the attitude of the English themselves towards the Muhammadans was strikingly modified. The imputations levelled against Musalmans, as discontented and mutinous, became less frequently heard. In certain special cases a mutual friendliness between the English rulers of Northern India and the Muhammadan gentry arose in its place.

All this had taken nearly half a century to accomplish—years of hard, painful, incessant struggles, such as the present generation could scarcely appreciate or understand. It was still true—Munshi Zaka Ullah used to say to me—that the deficiency to be made good, the lee-way to be recovered, was enormous. Compared with the standard of intellectual advance among the Hindus, Muhammadan education in Western knowledge could scarcely be said to have begun. The community, as a whole, was so backward.



But he did not experience now such feelings of despondency as he had done thirty or forty years ago. He knew his own people. He realised their splendid vitality. He understood what stores of energy were still latent among them, ready to be called forth. At last he was well assured that their inherent faith in progress would re-assert itself. The difficulties already met were far more serious than those which had still to be encountered. The best was yet to be.

I asked him one day on what he placed his trust. He replied at once: "On God first. We must always turn to Him in everything, and seek to understand His will. Without His guidance all our own efforts must be vain. But in human affairs, and from the human standpoint, I rely chiefly on education. I have spent my whole life in educational work; and the older I grow, the more and more I believe in it as a sovereign remedy. When I retired, after hard and strenuous labour, and could have lived at ease and in comfort, I went on working and working, and writing and writing instead. Why? Because, with all my heart, I have faith in education as the one remedy for the great evils and misfortunes of my own religious fellowship of Islam and also for India herself. Education is the lever with which to move the Muhammadan world in India to-day. If God gives me the strength again I shall get up from my bed to continue this work once more."

A few days before the last attack of the illness came on, which proved fatal to him, I ventured to ask him again: "Is your faith in education as strong as ever it was before?" He looked at me keenly, with a gloom in his aged eyes, and

said: "Nay, it is a thousand times stronger. If I had the whole of my life to live over again I would give it once more to education."

In the closing years of his life, when his bodily weakness had very greatly increased, and his sufferings were often intense, his mind was chiefly occupied with thoughts of God and His providential dealings with mankind. He told me a great deal concerning what he believed to be the essentials of the Islamic faith, pointing out to me that its very name, "Islam," which implied self-surrender to God, was a universal title. He believed that the goodness of God was upon all mankind, and what was needed of man was to surrender himself to that goodness.

Zaka Ullah loved to talk to me of that goodness of God as revealed in his own personal history. He mentioned the noble parents whom God had given him; his grandfather, who had been all in all to him; his early childhood when his feet had been kept in the path of purity during his younger days; the wonderful education he had been privileged to receive without cost; his preservation, along with his family, during the terrible Mutiny period; the unbroken health which God had afforded him so richly to enjoy; the children and wife with whom God had blessed his life on earth; the servants who had ever been so devoted to him; the intimate friends he had so dearly loved. Again and again he would recount to me the mercies which had been thus so plentifully bestowed—"Is He not truly named 'The Merciful and the Compassionate?' That is the title of God, which I like to meditate upon best of all."

Sometimes he would tell me about his own

simple philosophy of Religion. He used to say to me that on different occasions very wise and learned men had tried to prove the existence of God; and thereupon other men, who were regarded as wise, but in reality were very foolish, had tried to prove His non-existence. The only proof was experience. What was the use of talking to a blind man about scenery, or to a deaf man about music, when they had neither seen nor heard either? In the same way there was an experience of God which could not be denied for those who had attained it. Faith, he said, on another occasion, came from the heart far more than from the head. To all human beings had been given a heart to love: a few only had been gifted with intellectual cleverness. If belief in God had depended only on human ingenuity, then it would be a closed book for the greatest proportion of the human race. But God had made it depend on goodness, not cleverness. Therefore the poor were often God's best intelligencers. They understood. They were humble. They loved God, and He took pleasure in their love.

Sitting in the corner of the large room in the old library at Delhi, with his hands folded, and his eyes dimmed with age—meditative, dreaming, silent, looking out into the distance—he used often to bring before my imagination the picture of the Ancient Sage, and would almost seem unconsciously to be repeating the words:

“Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,  
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,  
Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one,

For nothing worthy proving can be proven,  
Nor yet disproven: wherefore be thou wise,  
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,  
And cling to faith beyond the forms of faith.

It was this faith beyond the outward forms of faith, to which Munshi Zaka Ullah clung fast, with a conviction that grew stronger instead of weaker. It remained with him in the fullness of its power, to sustain him during the great suffering and restless sleeplessness of his last nights and days. He sought always that which unites men in religion, rather than that which divides. He was one of God's peace-makers who brought unity among the children of men by his goodness and his love.

During the last days of all—indeed for many months before the end came—his bodily weakness was extreme. For one who had led such an active life, regular and industrious to a degree, engaged with his books and his writings, it was a great trial to him to be obliged to give up every activity and merely sit still; to have to be moved from place to place by those who attended upon him. He could not read: writing was out of the question; and on some days he was in too great pain even to talk. At this period, according to his special wish, I used to visit him daily, and sometimes more than once a day, when he called for me. He would look forward to my coming and arrange for each day, in his own methodical manner, mentioning the exact time at which he would expect me. It was especially incumbent on me not to get late for any cause whatever, because this would give him great anxiety, and he would imagine that some evil had befallen me.

At one time, the object and meaning of his own suffering, which he realised could only end in death, seemed to exercise him greatly. He sought to find reason in it all. "What is the use," he said, "of my lingering on like this, now that my work is done?" Then he would, as it were, answer his own question and put it in this way:

"I have had, you see, so little illness during my long life—indeed no illness at all till now—and therefore, as the end draws near, God has given me this suffering in order to draw me closer to Himself and make me more truly submissive to His will. This is the one thought that comforts me when I lie awake during the long hours of the night and cannot sleep. And then there has come to me this further thought, that there is so much suffering in the world, not only of old men like me, who have lived their full span and had the best of life, and therefore may rightly be called upon to suffer a little before they die; but of so many of God's innocent creatures, who seem to be actually born to an existence almost wholly of suffering. The dumb animals, the poor birds, the widows, the orphans, the children that are cradled in misery, what is the meaning of it all? Certainly I should never have faced this question and sympathised with these poor creatures, whom God has made, if I had not myself known what suffering was before the end came."

The subject, for a considerable time, seemed almost to have a fascination for him, and he often returned to it; but his argument got no further than what I have stated. Once I ventured to ask him if this thought of the vastness of unmerited, innocent suffering in the world, both

in man and beast, had ever weakened at all his faith in the omnipotent goodness of God. He turned to me with a beautiful light in his face and answered that his faith had passed beyond the region of such doubts. We were all children, he said, little children, who could only spell out the alphabet, as it were, of Almighty God's wisdom. It was enough if we learnt on this earth our first letters correctly. God would teach us further lessons after death.

He had no fear whatever of death. Indeed his one great longing towards the end was that death might come soon. All his own anxiety was for others, and he was continually thinking of them, especially about his sons who were absent. The anxiety complex made him imagine all sorts of terrible things happening to them which were never likely to occur.

At times, towards the end, when his physical helplessness was very great indeed, he became very low-spirited, and quite unlike his bright and genial self. One of the chief causes of this despondency he only confided to me after many days. The fear had haunted him that owing to insomnia and the strain of this anxiety, which was never relaxed, he might lose his reason. "My mind has been so clear up to now," he said to me at last, "it would be terrible if I were to go out of my mind before I die." On such occasions nothing that I could say seemed able to reassure him for more than a short time. The fear would return, and he longed to have me with him when it came back to his mind, in order to comfort him.

All this, from beginning to end, was a pure hallucination due to old age. For his mind kept

singularly clear and sane right up to the last, except for this one weakness of controlling the imagination while he was alone. He told me that he would imagine each of his children in turn on the verge of death and become quite certain that some accident had happened to them. This would be a kind of waking nightmare to him, and he longed for human companionship when these evil waking dreams came to him. But such days of despondency and anxiety were only occasional with him. At other times, and on other days, he was bright and cheerful again, and would discuss difficult subjects with me in a way that surprised me when I considered his extreme bodily weakness. His active mind seemed almost to gleam piercingly right through his frail body and to be independent of its frailty.

All through that last summer his own children were chiefly in his thoughts night and day. As I have said, his greatest trouble of all was that, in his physical weakness, he seemed quite unable to restrain his fears about them. Waking and sleeping alike, these terrible fears would haunt him. More than anything else, perhaps, he valued my visits at the last on that account, because he was able to tell me about these fears and I was able to relieve them at least for a moment. These anxieties showed the strength of his affection for his children, and how little his thoughts were concerned with his own fate. It was a very great consolation to him, when his sons were able to get leave from their several duties in order to be with him for some weeks before he died. At the last, he was never content unless one of them was by his side, and he would clasp the hand of his son tightly in his

own while consciousness wavered to and fro. He passed his final days on earth in almost a half-conscious state.

Late one evening, after leaving him practically unconscious, I was recalled by one of my Muhammadan pupils, who lived close to his house. He had been sent to tell me that Zaka Ullah was dying. I went at once to see him, and when I had reached the room where he lay I heard him repeat over and over again the short prayers and expressions of faith which are recited by Musalmans in the hour of death. Then he gradually sank into complete unconsciousness and remained so until he breathed his last.

His last conscious words were prayers to God, and along with them the one word of human affection, "Beta, Beta!"—"My son, My son!"



## CHAPTER XII

### ZAKA ULLAH'S CHARACTER

AMONG his friends, Munshi Zaka Ullah was proverbial for his good health. During the whole of his long life he never had one serious illness until the disease attacked him from which he died. He scarcely spent a single day in bed. He seemed entirely to have escaped that scourge of Delhi during last century,—malaria. This showed that he must have been, what is called, a non-malarial subject; for he took no precautions.

As a direct consequence of his splendid health, he was a man of abounding activity and unceasing cheerfulness. He astonished even those who knew him best of all by the extraordinary amount of work he was able to perform. When I asked him the cause of his good health and his working capacity, he would tell me that it was chiefly due to his regular habits. His body always knew just what it had to perform and did it. He learnt to be punctual in early childhood from his mother's example and instruction. The habit of doing everything methodically grew more and more upon him, until it came to be a source of pain and vexation to him if he had to suffer from any irregularity.

Once, while repairs were being done to his old home, he used to go every morning to another house for his breakfast. On the way, he had to pass by the home of an old friend, Syed Hamid, the eldest son of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. To his

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great amusement, he noticed one morning that Hamid, his friend, was standing with his watch in his hand. He stopped and asked him what he was doing. Hamid replied that his own watch had run down in the night, because it had not been wound up, and he was setting it right by Zaka Ullah's morning walk. "Oh! I see," said the latter, "You are using me for a stop watch!" and both of them laughed.

Zaka Ullah never overworked himself, but he did his appointed task regularly and conscientiously on almost every day in the year, with the exception of festivals and Sundays, when he would visit and receive his friends. He would begin reading and writing at 6 a.m. in the summer and 7 a.m. in the winter. He would take his breakfast at 10 a.m. and a siesta afterwards. Then he would begin working again at 1 p.m. and continue steadily till 5 p.m. At 5 p.m. he would have his bath and afterwards go round to his Literary Club at the Municipal Library, returning home again at 7 p.m. in winter and 8 p.m. in summer for his dinner. After a time of recreation with his wife and children, he would retire to rest and sleep soundly till morning.

As his writing assumed greater importance he very much disliked people calling upon him during his working hours. This was one of the things that most disturbed his temper. He found it very difficult to be patient, and expressed openly his vexation if it happened more than once.

He never did any writing at night. Once he told me that for three years only, when he was a student, he worked on with his studies late into the night; but he gave up the habit when he

found it did not suit him. He never returned to it, however heavy the pressure of work, and however great the temptation. He told me that he felt certain that this had helped greatly to preserve his good health.

Furthermore, he kept strictly his rule to retire each evening between nine and ten o'clock. Whenever he was invited out by his Hindu friends to their marriage festivities he would gladly accept their invitation; but it was a recognised thing, that, whatever happened, he should be allowed to retire at nine o'clock, because everyone in the city knew his habit, which he strictly observed.

At his own home, when his Sufi friends, who came annually to Delhi, were present as his welcome guests for about a week, and Sufi singers had been invited to chant religious hymns, Zaka Ullah would make every arrangement for his friends and sit with them as long as possible. But just as the hour of nine o'clock struck, he would take his leave and make his departure from the company quietly, and no one would be offended. On Sundays, except for the visits of his friends, he took rest for the greater part of the day and spent it with his children, entering with fun into all their games. It was his one complete holiday every week, and it was never broken into by work. But it had for him no religious significance; it was simply a matter of convenience. In matters of food he observed by choice and habit, whenever he was able to do so, extreme simplicity. He always preferred the very simple inexpensive Indian dishes, which are the usual food of the country. If he were ever dining out with a friend, or at a banquet, and

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rich food was given him, he would receive it from his host, but decrease the quantity actually consumed to a minimum. If any of his own children in his house complained about the quality of the food, Zaka Ullah would ask him to stop eating; because it was against all rules of health, he said, to eat without an appetite.

Zaka Ullah always kept one servant to attend to his personal wants, which were very few. This servant, for forty-five years, used daily to cook his food for him. He was so faithful and good that he was trusted far more as a friend of the family than as an ordinary servant; indeed, the same was the case with all his other house servants. He treated them with such personal kindness and consideration that they became devoted to him, and would do anything for him. One of the very beautiful things that I was privileged to witness in his household was the affection which existed between him and his personal attendant. Night and day the latter would attend to his every need. No service was too lowly for him to render. In the hot weather, when by some accident the punkah coolie failed, I have seen him fanning his master, hour after hour, while he was asleep, rather than allow him to suffer at all from the heat.

One day, as Zaka Ullah spoke to me about this servant, his feelings of affection seemed to overcome him, and he could not restrain his tears. He called his servant to his side and said in my presence these words:—"The love of this faithful man for me has been one of God's greatest mercies during my illness. If he had been my own son, he could not have been more devoted to me. Without his help I could not have endured

the long nights of sleepless suffering, which God had thought fit that I should pass through."

He then called him close to his side and laid his hand upon him, invoking on his head God's blessing, that He, the most Merciful and Compassionate, would recompense him in the Day of Resurrection. I never understood quite so fully the depth of Zaka Ullah's religious life as I did at that moment of prayer and blessing. He appeared to me, then, with his white hair and dim eyes, like one of the old saints or patriarchs who lived in the presence of God.

On one occasion, to mention a slight incident which came to my own personal notice, I once obtained the service for him, when he was in great difficulty, of an old widow, from one of the lowest classes in Delhi. She belonged to what were called the "untouchables." He engaged her at a very generous rate to pull his punkah. But in a few days, coming to learn how poor she was, he made her a small extra allowance. When the hot weather was over, and her work was done, he gave her, in addition to her wages, sufficient money to buy herself warm clothing for the winter. This was a small thing in itself, but it was an indication of his normal character. It was one of those incidents that Wordsworth would have called,

"The little unremembered acts—  
Of kindness and of love,"

which are truly, as the poet goes on to say, "the best portion of a good man's life." For they show in what direction the current of life itself is set.

One of the noticeable features of Zaka Ullah, which went along with his good health, was his

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perpetual fund of good humour and happiness. The author of *Sir Syed Ahmed's Tour in the Punjab*, described, in a serio-comic sketch, the different members of the deputation, who went with Sir Syed on a tour to obtain money for the College at Aligarh. Zaka Ullah's nickname in this sketch was "Chihgham," which might be translated "Free-from-Care." He carried on jokes with this begging party the whole way, and thus helped them through the most depressing work of collecting funds. He had a wonderfully clear and delightful laugh. Although very shy with strangers, he was ready to joke with every member of his own family; above all, he was happy and merry with his children.

He had the faculty of becoming like a child while playing with children, and was a great favourite. A Hindu gentleman from Benares, a complete stranger, met the son of Zaka Ullah in a railway compartment one day, and finding out who his father was, said to him, "I shall always remember your father by his face, which was a picture of health and happiness. I have rarely met anyone who was so radiantly happy."

One of the secrets of his good health was his complete freedom from any anxiety about the future, as far as his own life and fortunes were concerned. Nothing ever troubled him as to ways and means. He was able to leave everything with God. He formed this rule of his life quite early, and it influenced all his ideals and aims. Thus his life remained of one piece throughout as one of faith and trust. It was the living present that always engaged his attention; he found in his day's hard work a continual satisfaction.

"If I make deep plans about the future," he said, "I find that they rarely come true. Therefore, I leave everything in the hands of God, and have no worry at all. God knows everything: I know nothing."

This did not mean any mere carelessness, or fatalism, but rather a true humility and a great contentment. His ideal was to see each one of his daily duties faithfully and honestly performed. He used to say that he had never been endowed with that faculty of foresight by which men looked into the future and made plans accordingly; but he had been given a greater blessing, namely, a mind free from care.

"God has given to my family," he said happily, "many other good things in life, but worldly wisdom we have none." Then he added with a merry laugh, "For seventy generations we have lacked it, and therefore we are not likely to get it now. When God was distributing it, we were absent. We have only been able to see the next thing to be done, and to serve our masters loyally and faithfully. For fools like us, therefore, the one thing is to be honest, straightforward, and truthful in our service. Then it is easy to go straight to Paradise. But we must never get ourselves into difficulties by shifting and changing about, now this way, now that. We must simply work on steadily, day by day, to the end."

No one could get Zaka Ullah to make a speech in public. Once or twice he tried and broke down; so he made up his mind, as far as lay in his power, never to attempt it again. He was far too nervous and shy ever to succeed. On the other hand, he was a great conversationalist.

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When in the company of trusted and familiar friends, he used to amuse them by his terse and pithy sayings, and many of his utterances became proverbial. Maulvi Altaf Husain said once concerning him, "Zaka Ullah is like a nightingale of a thousand songs before his friends; but in the presence of an audience he is tongue-tied, like a deaf-mute."

His companions used to chaff him about his timidity in public, and he used to enjoy the joke. But very rarely could he be prevailed upon to break his own rule and speak. Whenever he was forced to do so, the result was the same. He would lamentably break down through nervousness and modest self-diffidence. For he was at the same time the most modest and the most companionable of men.

His temperament was highly emotional. He was a man of strong feelings and great sensitiveness. In public he tried to restrain himself to the utmost on all occasions; but in the presence of his intimate friends and relations he would allow his own inner nature to have its free course.

Some twelve years before his death, Zaka Ullah's wife was very ill, and it was thought by the doctor that she was dying. His two sons had been called to her bedside. When they came out of the room, after offering what they thought to be their last farewell to their mother before her death, they were seated close together in silence, too full of grief to speak. Zaka Ullah came in, and the sight of his two children sitting thus completely overwhelmed him. He went hastily apart into another room and gave way to his grief. After a time, when he thought that he could control his tears, he came back to



comfort them; but again he broke down, and had to retire a second time.

Whenever any one of his children was ill, his son tells me, he used to be pathetically insistent that everyone who entered the sick room should be cheerful, though he himself was quite plainly racked with anxiety. He would undertake the greater part of the nursing, and would sit up night and day with the sick child, leaving all his other work. He tried always to express the greatest hopefulness, though it was easy to see the torture of suffering he was undergoing. It was at such times that his usual freedom from anxiety seemed entirely to leave him. His intense affection made him fancy a multitude of alarms, which he tried unsuccessfully to hide under a cover of cheerfulness and hope. When his servants were ill he would at once go and visit them and sit with them, looking after their comforts.

From the time when he began to earn money for himself, his first care was to provide for his parents. He managed in his youth to save sufficient money to provide for them both in times of difficulty and danger and he paid for their pilgrimage to Mecca. He also paid for the education of his younger brother and the marriage expenses of his three sisters and two brothers. Indeed, the burden of the large family came upon him, and he joyfully undertook it as a duty. It would be difficult to find a greater sacrifice than he himself had made for the sake of the members of his family who depended on him for their support. His own life was put entirely in the background in comparison with theirs during all his earlier years until he had nearly reached middle age.

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It was a trait of his own emotional nature, and often amusing to others, to hear him call, as a mark of special affection, those who were his brothers and cousins by the title of "father." One of his sons writes: "In the year before my father died, I went to him and found him sitting in a dejected manner. So I wanted to cheer him and said, 'Father, you haven't given your son his festival present this year.' He looked in my face and smiled—almost the last smile I saw there—and said to me, 'Beta (my son), when you were a child you used to play at being father. Have you forgotten that? Now you must be Father to me, and let me be your child. For I am so old and weak and helpless, that I am no more than a child.'"

One of the characteristics that stands out in my memory was his old world courtesy and hospitality. No pains were too great to provide for the comfort of his guests. It was only with the greatest difficulty at first that I would prevent him from trying to rise in his old age and infirmity when I came each day to see him. At last, one day, he called me by the name Beta (my son), as he embraced me, to my great joy. This became his custom, and ever after that he would allow me to do things for him and to wait upon his needs. He would always give me his embrace when coming or going. He would say at the last, "My heart has grown cold as a stone. I have no affection left. I cannot feel as I used to do." But though he said this, and felt it, I have rarely seen anyone so full of simple affection and tenderness.

His son tells me that one of the few times when his father was very angry with him indeed was

when he refused to do some little act of courtesy for a comparative stranger. He told his father that the real reason was that the person in question had insulted him. "When?" was the immediate question, put sharply and sternly. "About two months ago," was the reply. "Then you are no child of mine if you do not go at once and make up your quarrel. You are a worthless son if you bear malice in your heart. Go and do at once what you ought to have done to your father's guest!"

A distant relation of Zaka Ullah's had taken to evil ways, and had been convicted and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. On his release, owing to the disgrace, he had been forsaken by his kith and kin. He was even refused admittance to their houses and was in great distress. But when Zaka Ullah heard of it, believing him to be sufficiently punished for his crime, and having great pity for him, he took care of him and admitted him to his own house and kept him at his own expense right up to the day of his death.

Amongst his closest friends were included many Hindus, both at Delhi and during his long residence as Professor at the Muir Central College, Allahabad. In every way possible, by word and example, he tried to bridge over the gulf between the two religious communities.

I have met personally very many Hindus who have spoken of the exceeding courtesy and consideration to themselves shown by Munshi Zaka Ullah. Some of the most touching letters which I have received about him, after it was known that I intended to write a brief memoir, came from Hindus. I will transcribe at this point the

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words written to me by his son, Inayat Ullah, because they will explain this trait in his character more graphically than any words of mine. He writes as follows:—

“The son of Pundit Tulsi Ram told me that every evening, when they lighted the lamps as an act of worship in their ancestral home, they included the name of my father, Zaka Ullah, in the prayer that is repeated at that time, along with the name of those who were nearest and dearest to them.

“Yesterday, when Pundit Kashi Nath came to see me and saw me writing to you about my father, he asked me to add that it was his own assured belief that no Muhammadan in India was a more sincere friend of the Hindus than my father, and that every Hindu loved him.

“Eight or nine years ago, a Hindu subordinate judge came to see me, and he told me that he held me and regarded me as a brother, because my father, Zaka Ullah, had treated him like his own child, and he could never forget his kindness.

“My father had a sense of great admiration for the Hindus, on account of their frugal and economical ways, their abstemiousness of life, their business habits and sterling industry, their providence and quick intelligence, their philosophy, literature and music. He also had a very high opinion of Hindu intellect, coming into close contact with it in his work of the Education Department.

“Few people were so well informed about the life, manners, customs, festivals, religious ideas, and even the mythology, of the Hindus as my father. Once when giving me a piece of advice,

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in a short letter, he simply quoted a Sanskrit proverb to me and explained its meaning. He would not brook to hear a word said against the Hindus by any of his sons; and if even the slightest reference was made disparagingly, he would reprimand the one who made it and point out the mistake."

With regard to Munshi Zaka Ullah's religious opinions, I have already written at some length; and it would not have been necessary to write any further if his position had not been partly misunderstood. But a few words may be added in order to make his position absolutely clear.

First of all, as Dr. Nazir Ahmad has said, in his Preface, there was much talk in his earlier days to the effect that Zaka Ullah was intending to follow Ram Chandra, Chiman Lal, and others and become a Christian. This, I believe, along with Dr. Nazir Ahmad, to have been entirely unfounded. He admired the Christian Faith, and was especially attracted by the beautiful teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, which he told me he felt to be "Indian" through and through. But there was nothing in his life, so far as I can gather from his oldest friends, or from my own knowledge and experience, that would even remotely confirm the report that was spread (giving him great pain), that he was about to change his religion. Apart from all other factors, the essential conservatism of his own nature would have made this highly improbable, even though such miracles have happened in human experience; but, in his case, there was not even the wish to do so. With one so fearless in character, humble in heart, and simple in life, the mere danger of persecution would not have

deterred him, if he had ever felt the necessity; but he did not feel the necessity.

Again, I have heard constantly in Delhi the report, disparagingly repeated, that he was a "free-thinker." Sometimes even I have heard it said, by those who should have known better, that he did not believe in God. The latter charge I can personally deny as utterly and absolutely false. For no one could have spoken as he did, day after day to me, concerning God, if he had been an unbeliever. No one could have lived daily in the consciousness of God's presence, and have gone to Him daily, hourly, for strength and support in his last, long illness, as he did, and all the while have not believed in Him. Such a thing is impossible,—unthinkably incredible.

I have enquired also from those who knew him intimately, before my own friendship with him began, and I have been assured that there was never any time in his life, when his simple childlike faith and trust in God was ever shaken. Here again the essential conservatism of his own nature, and his inheritance of a profound religious tradition from a long line of ancestors, which I have pointed out, would have made such a *volte face* extraordinarily unlikely.

In reality, as all who knew him could testify, his deep religious character and his ardent faith in God were self-evident—a part of his own nature—like the air we breathe—something that did not need to be mentioned, it was so essential and immediate, so certain and so true.

With regard to his being a free-thinker I would wish to write as follows: If the phrase "free-thinker" means, that he thought freely and sincerely and with an open mind about Religion,

and regarded the spirit of his Islamic faith to be more important than the letter, then the phrase is nobly true concerning Zaka Ullah, and he well deserves the title. For it would have been hard to find a man more free from formalism and bigotry, more open-minded and tolerant. It was this fact that made him a close friend and associate of earnest Hindus all through his long life. It was this also which was one of the things that drew me instinctively to him from the first, and has remained rooted in my memory ever since.

But if the phrase "free-thinker" is meant to imply a scoffer at Religion, or one who thinks or speaks slightingly about religious belief in others; then the charge is wholly and entirely false. His attitude was always one of reverence and respect, and he was himself a deeply and sincerely religious man.

At the same time, I repeat, he was not a formalist. He believed at all times in the spirit rather than the letter. He venerated, indeed, and openly respected those, like his father and grandfather, with whom the formal side of religion was a living reality, which clearly helped to sustain the spiritual life. He used to speak to me with love and admiration and conscious pride of his grandfather who for seventy-two years had never missed the formal prayers at the Mosque. With his own hard-earned money he sent his parents to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, prescribed by Islam in its formal code, and he rejoiced in their devotion. He made the sacrifice of postponing his own marriage, delaying it for many years, in order to give his parents this great satisfaction of their own religious needs.

But his own nature, in this respect, was different. He lived a life of simplicity and comparative poverty with the consciousness of God's presence ever about him; and he left off during the greater part of his life many of the outward observances which were connected with his Islamic faith. Yet never by any word that passed from his lips in my presence (and we talked freely and intimately about these very things) did I gather that he regarded himself as anything else than a true Muslim. Every word that he said to me implied that he was; and, as I have already said, he made me respect Islam and understand its true inward greatness in a way that I had never done before.

Zaka Ullah was fearless in speaking out about any injustice that he had witnessed. He spoke out boldly, for instance, concerning the scenes that had taken place after the Mutiny, when evil passions were let loose. He was no flatterer or time-server. But from the depth of an honest heart he believed in living a life of peace and charity with all men. He hated violence of any kind, and was ready at all times to endeavour to overcome evil with good. He valued also the peace which the English rule had brought. In his own family circle, among his friends, as well as in his writings, he upheld his faith in that peace and also in the religious toleration which had come with it.

One who knew intimately both Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Munshi Zaka Ullah, and saw much of them together and apart, has thus given me the impression of the effect which their different characters had made upon him:—

“In Sir Syed Ahmed I saw the grandeur, the



lion-like strength, the high ideals, the passionate enthusiasm, of a great mind. No Musalman, whom I ever met, impressed me more by the force and dignity of his character and his commanding intellectual greatness than Sir Syed Ahmed. Wherever he went, he naturally took the lead. His personality demanded it, and men instinctively followed him. His very presence and appearance were commanding. He was a born leader of men.

"In Munshi Zaka Ullah, on the other hand, who was his devoted companion and disciple, I saw the nature of man in its mildest form. Simplicity, truthfulness, tenderness,—these were the three dominant colours. Virtue shone in his eyes, and love, not merely for the ideal, but for the individual. He had a wealth of affection for his friends. Submissive and shy before those in superior rank or authority, or in the society of the great; instinctively retiring from any public position or function; he was for ever eager to gather knowledge and experience and to use all that he had gained for the good of mankind. From the highest to the lowest in the Islamic religious community, he was honoured and loved for his good nature, his learning, his useful life of honest labour undertaken for the intellectual advancement of his country."

This estimate is, I believe, a true one. Zaka Ullah took the second place always, not the first, because he knew that he was not born to command. The sentence about himself that I have quoted from his own son's recollections is remarkably accurate. "We have only been able," he said to his son, "to see the next thing to be done, and to serve our masters loyally and faithfully."

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He was not a genius, but his writings show commanding talent and industry and intellectual ability on every page. His loyalty to those whom he revered was unbounded.

If I were to make a comparison from my own personal recollection it would be natural to draw it between the two old friends who were equally dear to me, but in different ways—Maulvi Nazir Ahmad and Munshi Zaka Ullah. The former was rugged as a rock and had rock-like strength and determination: his very features were rugged, and they remained stern, until a touch of humour or a sudden breath of affection passed over them like a gleam of sunshine. Of Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, I always stood somewhat in awe. I need not have done so, because he had a very deep affection for me, and never spoke to me a single harsh word. All the same, while I revered his personality, I found it also somewhat awe-inspiring.

But the impression made upon me by Munshi Zaka Ullah was quite different. He won me, and overcame my own shrinking diffidence, from the very first. His gentleness seemed to plead for gentleness in return; and his eyes, which had a beautiful, tender look in them, always spoke of peace. To talk with Maulvi Nazir Ahmad was to be conscious almost at once of a volcanic nature, which might easily be disturbed by a word and break out into an explosion or eruption. I have witnessed those storms, and have seen also the calm return again after the hurricane was over. There was a touch of genius somewhere always present in what Nazir Ahmad spoke; something out of the common, sometimes even erratic. He reminded me, if

I may draw the literary parallel, of what Carlyle must have been in his old age at Chelsea. He had a supreme contempt for public opinion, and did not fail to show it. With him, therefore, I felt myself in the presence of a very commanding personality and a man of genius, who would stand out in any company of men as one to respect and follow, knowing he would always lead. Yet, when I have said all this about him, I feel at once that I have left out the greatest part of him—his warmth of heart, his goodness and affection. It was an overwhelming experience to me to discover the depth of that affection in Maulvi Nazir Ahmad and to share it. While I have spoken truly of my awe of him, I would not wish to be mistaken. The love which I had towards him was far greater; yet the awe remained.

But with Munshi Zaka Ullah it was quite the reverse. I had no awe of him at all, except for his humility and goodness. He had no commanding personality like the other. He had not also any remarkable genius, except the genius of simplicity. He was born to follow, not to lead; to serve, not to command; to win by gentleness, not by strength. There was nothing at all like a volcano in him: there was rather the atmosphere of genial sunshine mingled with April showers. The deepest side of him was his emotional nature. He could be loyal and faithful even to death. He was the soul of truth.

An English resident, who had for a very long time lived in Delhi and had known Munshi Zaka Ullah, though not so intimately, yet for a much longer period than I had, once gave me his own

opinion of him, and I wrote it down. I asked him what was the special feature in Munshi Zaka Ullah that had attracted him most. He answered me without any hesitation:—

“His integrity of character. I can never remember him breaking any promise or refusing to fulfil any engagement. He was a man of his word: and his word was as good as his bond. His silent generosity also attracted me greatly. He was by no means a rich man, rather the opposite. But always, when I had been collecting for famine relief, or for some worthy public charity, I have been surprised at the liberal way in which he would give; and without any pressure or personal motive behind it. He usually asked me not to mention his name in connection with his gift, and thus tried to keep it anonymous. Whatever he promised was given immediately. My one regret was that I was not able to know him better.”

The last word I wish to write is this. He was known and recognised by all, and especially by those who knew him most intimately and closely, to be a man of the purest private life. In an age of change and transition, when laxity of morals was by no means unfrequent, even among those who were leaders of men, he maintained the strictest moral standard in all his domestic relations. The purity of his nature shone out in his face. The follies of youth had no attraction for him, and he kept himself unsullied by them. Once I remember one of his most intimate companions using the word “ferishta” about him, meaning “angel”; and I felt, as he used it, that he referred to this unsullied purity. “The great trouble is,” he would often say to me,

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“people do not fear God.” It was in this fear of God that he kept his own character stainless.

With this memory of him I would complete the picture of his life work that I have drawn. As I look back on him there are two texts from my own Scriptures which rise instinctively to my mind. The first runs thus: “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.” The second is the most sacred and beautiful of all: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

## Appendix

THE following appreciation of Islam has recently been given in his Croall Lectures on "Semitic Religions," by the Rev. Dr. David Kay, D.D., of St. Andrew's University, when preaching in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh:

"Nine years residence in close contact with Musalmans has supplied the writer with the means of judging the Moslem religion by its fruits; and his experience during these years is the chief determinant of his conclusions.

"No description of Ramazan can do justice to its effect on half a million souls who have completed that month of bodily discipline. From sunrise to sunset every Moslem has forbidden himself the use of food, water, tobacco. On the Night of Power, towards the end of Ramazan, the men gather in the mosques for common worship. The fasting by day has provided a spiritual exaltation in every individual; the prayers express adoration, penitence, consecration to God. The collective suggestion becomes all powerful, and the spiritual result incalculable. Every gesture, every utterance of these worshippers confesses that "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Judged by its fruits, Islam can claim a power over its adherents and a pervasive influence on their lives which contemporary systems attain only among their most zealous groups.

"Religious revival is often followed by fresh intellectual energy, and this has been the case

with Islam. For four centuries, secular knowledge at its best found more hospitality among Moslems than among contemporary Christians. Philosophy, which had been dumb since Greek was forgotten, now found her voice again in the Arabic language.

“British Christians owe to themselves and to Islam the duty of understanding the rise and progress of this religion. Our circle of knowledge welcomes information about ancient Crete and Egypt. There is a richer intellectual stimulus in appreciating the spiritual forces that emerged from Arabia.”

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