

# ALIGATLANTA

DEC 2023

Carrying Forward the **Aligarh Movement** for  
the Betterment of Our Communities



*Muslim Experience in the US*

*Youth Perspective on AAAA*

*Muslims' Participation in Education in India*

*The Filmī-'Ilmī Formula*

*Zaad-e-Safar*

*My journey from Ghazipur to Alpharetta*



**Azfar Haque**

**Bulldog Insurance Inc.**

**713 Forest Parkway Suite #D**

**Forest Park GA. 30297**

**Cell: (404)-642-1000**

email: [azfar@bulldoginsurance.com](mailto:azfar@bulldoginsurance.com)



**From Editor's Desk**



Welcome to the latest edition of our magazine, where we embark on a journey through the diverse landscapes of experiences, education, culture, and the preservation of heritage. In this issue, we explore stories that illuminate the rich tapestry of AAAA life and influence both within and beyond borders.

*Center of Muslim Experience in the US - Transforming Narratives and Strengthening Belonging:* Delve into the vibrant narratives that shape the Muslim experience in the United States, as we explore how individuals and communities are transforming stories and fostering a sense of belonging.

*Muslims' Participation in Education in India:* Uncover the challenges and triumphs of Muslim participation in the educational landscape of India, shedding light on the impact and contributions within this dynamic sphere.

*The Filmī- Ilmī Formula: Shama Magazine and the Urdu Cosmopolis:* Take a cinematic journey with Shama Magazine, exploring the intersection of film and knowledge in the Urdu cosmopolis, as we delve into the magazine's unique approach to storytelling.

*The Fight to Preserve the Urdu Script in the Digital World:* Witness the efforts to preserve the beauty of the Urdu script in the digital age, as we explore the challenges and innovations in maintaining a crucial aspect of cultural identity.

*My Journey from Ghazipur to Alpharetta:* Join a personal odyssey from Ghazipur to Alpharetta, as Dr. Zia Siddiqui shares his transformative journey, reflecting on the bridges crossed and the lessons learned along the way.

*Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa - Architects of Cultural Legacy in Atlanta:* Meet the cultural architects shaping Atlanta's legacy, as we spotlight Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa, individuals whose contributions have left an indelible mark on the city's cultural landscape.

*Bulldog Insurance: An Alig's Entrepreneurial Success Story:* Discover the entrepreneurial story of Bulldog Insurance, founded by Azfar Haque, a distinguished alumnus of Aligarh Muslim University.

*Embracing Legacy and Community:* Learn a daughter's perspective on Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta.

*Zaad-e-Safar:* Embark on a literary adventure with "Zaad-e-Safar," a section that invites readers to explore the enriching world of AMU through evocative stories and narratives.

*Poetry by Inamullah:* Immerse yourself in the poetic verses of Inamullah, as his words paint vivid history of Urdu language.

*Our Regular Features:* Don't miss our regular features, where we continue to bring you messages, event details and photographs, and memoriam. And our acknowledging of our sponsors!

We sincerely thank Shahid Ali, Syed Hasan Kamal, Syed Waseem, Dr. Shahid Rafiq and Hassaan Ansari for helping us in the articles and photos. We express our sincere gratitude to all the contributors, authors and sponsors for their timely submission and support. We also acknowledge S. Nasir Hussain for his help in Urdu typing.

The views and opinions expressed in these articles/ads are those of the authors/sponsors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of AAAA.

Sincerely,

Rasheed Ahmad, Ph.D.

Shoeb Ahmad, Ph.D.

**Honorary Editors**

[rasheedahmad@hotmail.com](mailto:rasheedahmad@hotmail.com)

**Cover Photo:** Gulestan-e-Syed (Top), Kennedy Hall University Auditorium Complex (Bottom)



# ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

Aligarh - 202 002, U.P., India.

A Central University (NAAC ACCREDITED "A+" GRADE)

**PROF. MOHAMMAD GULREZ**

*M.Phil., Ph.D. (Political Science)*

**Vice-Chancellor**

Phone: (Off) +91-571-2700994/2702167

(Res) +91-571-2700443

Fax: (Off) +91-571-2702607

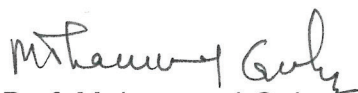
Email: [vcamu@amu.ac.in](mailto:vcamu@amu.ac.in)

05<sup>th</sup> October 2023

## Message



1. It gives me immense pleasure to learn that Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta, is organising an event to commemorate the 206th birth anniversary of our Founder, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.
2. Aligarh Muslim University has indeed come a long way since its inception as MAO College. Today, we have students from across the globe, studying in the Aligarh Muslim University. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a visionary and a social reformer and his dream of MAO College becoming a University, whose students serve as a medium of socio-economic & educational development and transformation, is now being fulfilled and turned into reality. It is a matter of pride for all of us to be a part of this institution whose foundation was laid by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. His farsightedness and unique initiative have made our University a repository of not only knowledge but values and culture as well.
3. It is laudable that the Association has taken this initiative of publishing the Magazine 'ALIGAtlanta'. Needless to mention that members of the Association have always served the society and the University in various ways. It fills us with immense pride to see our Alumni celebrate their association with AMU. The Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta and its members have always extended their support for the development and promotion of their alma mater. My compliments to the Office Bearers and members of the Association for the excellent job which they are doing.

  
Prof. Mohammad Gulrez

# The Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA)

[www.aligarhassociation.org](http://www.aligarhassociation.org)



## **Executive Council**

Mr. Shahid Ali  
*President*

Mr. S. Nawaid  
Tanzeem  
*Vice-President*

Mr. Nadeem Fatmi  
*Treasurer*

Dr. Naushad Ghilzai  
*General Secretary*

Dr. Shoeb Ahmad  
*Past President*

## **Board of Trustees**

Dr. Asif Taufiq  
*Chair*

Mr. Mushir Siddiqui  
*Member*

Dr. Abrar Khan  
*Member*

Dr. Rasheed Ahmad  
*Member*

Mr. Shoeb Ahmad  
*Member*

-----  
AAAA provides educational assistance to the needy students, helps our Alma Mater/other institutions to modernize, facilitates faculty student exchange and collaboration with institutions of higher learning, promotes Urdu language and its art forms.

AAAA is a non-profit organization with a tax-exempt status, 501(c) (3)



**President's Message**

Dear members of the AAAA community,

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Atlanta community for their unwavering support during my two-year tenure as the president of the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta. It has been a privilege to witness the generosity and support of our community in contributing to the well-being of fellow humans.

The success of our Eid Milan Picnics in 2022 and 2023 was a testament to the unity and appreciation among the diverse communities in Georgia. This event served as a valuable platform to showcase the true essence of our faith to neighbors, fostering understanding and dispelling misconceptions perpetuated by media portrayals.

In today's challenging times, where negative stereotypes surround us, it becomes imperative for us, as peace-loving and compassionate individuals, to exhibit our authentic selves. At the Eid Milan Picnic, we embraced all communities with open arms, sharing the joy of Eid ul Fitar and building bridges of friendship and understanding.

I commend organizations like the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta for their liberal approach, creating a space for liberal Muslims to showcase our unique culture through arts, literature, and music. While these efforts may seem like finding a needle in a haystack, they are crucial in changing the world's perception of us.

شکوہ ظلمت شب سے تو کہیں بہتر تھا  
اپنے حصے کی کوئی شمع جلاتے جاتے

I urge all brothers and sisters to play their part in spreading the message of peace and love, contributing to a harmonious world.

Sincerely,  
Shahid Ali  
President, AAAA  
[www.aligarhassociation.org](http://www.aligarhassociation.org)



## Muslims' Participation in Education in India

V.K. Tripathi\*, Ph.D.

Education has been pretty widespread in India before the advent of British rule. A survey carried by a British collector in 1822 revealed that before 1757 (when British East India Company defeated **Bengal Nawab Sirajuddaula** by deceit and began colonial rule over India), there were one lakh schools in Bengal and every village in Madras Presidency had a school. The teachers and students were a mix of Hindus and Muslims as well as other religions. Hindu teachers taught Muslim students and Muslim teachers taught Hindu students. **Education was a backbone of composite culture, in the making of which Sufis and Saints had played a vital role.** The **324-year-old Anglo Arabic School** in Delhi is a vibrant testimony of this heritage.

**During the British rule India went backward in education and economy.** Massive famines became a regular occurrence (which were not there in preceding 300 years as mentioned by Adam Jones in his book "Genocide: An Extended Introduction" published in 2006) as Indian textiles and other cottage industry were crushed to pave the way for British goods and heavy taxes were levied on agriculture. In 1835, **English Education Act** was passed. It reflected Macaulay's thinking who wanted the government to spend money only on imparting western education and not on oriental education, to form a class who may be interpreters between the British rulers and the millions whom they governed; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.

After the uprising of 1857, India came directly under the British crown. The state carried heavy repression. Indians turned towards education and political route. Muhammad 'Abid Husayn founded **Darul Uloom**, a theological institute, in Deoband (Saharanpur) in 1867. It produced great scholars and freedom fighters like **Shaykh al-Hind Mahmud Hasan Deobandi** (1851–1920). Hasan was the first student of Darul Uloom and later served as its principal. He launched movements to overthrow the British rule. In 1916, he was imprisoned in Malta. On release in 1920, he campaigned for the Non-cooperation movement. **Sir Syed Ahmad Khan** established the **Muhammadian Anglo-Oriental College** in 1875, that became Aligarh Muslim University in 1920. It produced eminent political leaders, scientists, historians and academicians. To promote secular outlook, it maintained Hindu student population of 30%. **Raja Mahendra Pratap** was one of its first graduates who in 1915 was chosen as the President of Provisional Government of India in exile. In 1883, **Allama Shibli Nomani** founded the Shibli National College. It evolved

into an extraordinary center where students are half and half Hindus and Muslims and secular values prevail. It produced outstanding scholars. Shibli also established Darul Musannefin Shibli Academy in 1914, that became a center of freedom fighters in the Gandhian era. Nehru and Azad stayed there.

In 1920, when Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement and gave a call of boycott of British education institutes, **Jamia Millia Islamia**, Delhi was established along with Kashi Vidyapeeth, Gujarat Vidyapeeth and others. The teachers worked with great dedication at nominal salaries and students studied knowing well that they had no chance of getting government jobs. **Dr. Zakir Hussain** emerged as a great educationist. In 1937, Gandhi called a **conference on education in Wardha** under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain. It was to discuss education policy for India as independence looked in sight. Looking at the gross poverty in India people would aim at achieving primary education for all. Gandhi thought differently. Let me put it in my own words. Just as a person after infancy has to walk on his/her own feet for whole life, one has to live and take all the decisions of life using his / her own mind. Thus everyone, slow or fast learner, has the **right to education up to the level of self-reliance in thinking and livelihood.** As India is poor, students, beyond primary classes, would work one hour or so per day to partially support their education. In present day United States, students in college follow this practice. **Gandhi turned Khadi workers and weavers into scholars and satyagrahis and these had a high percentage of Muslims.**

Government schools before independence and in early years after independence had significant percentage of Muslim teachers. I went to government primary school in my village Piprai, Dist. Jhansi. **Shri Ahmad Bakhsh** was my teacher. He offered namaz five times a day, hence, people called him Maulvi Sahib. He was the only teacher for five grades and 70 students. He taught with utmost sincerity and great competence in mathematics and Hindi. He had no distinction of caste or religion. His influence on our lives was so profound that our village remained free of sectarianism for decades after his retirement. In 1947 he was posted in a remote village, while his family lived in Lalitpur. His house was located in a Hindu locality. One day he came home from the village and found his door locked. He asked the neighbors. They said that the Muslims of the city, out of fear, had left for Bhopal in the morning and his family also went with them. They may be at the station if they could not get the train. Ahmad Bakhsh went to the train station. His family was there. He told them, **"We are born here, we will die here. Don't worry, Gandhi is alive."** And everybody

returned. Such was his faith in his neighbors. This is how Muslim teachers sailed the nation through the turmoil in most parts of India.

In the twilight years of independence, India produced great physicists. One of them was **Prof. Abdus Salam**. He was born in undivided India, graduated from Punjab University and got physics Nobel prize for his path breaking work on electro-weak interaction along with Glashow and Weinberg in 1979. He became the director of International Center for Theoretical Physics, TRIESTE, Italy and did monumental work in promoting science in third world countries. **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** was the first education minister in Independent India. He pursued the goal of universalization of primary education. In order to produce teachers, researchers and professionals, he promoted higher education. He established IITs to create technical manpower for modern industry and AIIMS to advance the health sector. **Dr. Abdul Kalam**, who later became the President of India, played pivotal role in the development of India's space program.

Nevertheless, the percentage of Muslims in higher education in independent India remained low for two reasons – poverty, lack of patronage and lack of hope of getting jobs. Massive communal riots in 1969 in Ahmedabad and Bhiwandi brought back sectarianism as a prominent force in Indian polity and that created an atmosphere of humiliation, non-conducive for education. Things turned for the worse during the nineties and again during the last one decade.

### Present Problems

The foremost problem is humiliating and othering atmosphere on campus. At the helm of academic institutions, including the minority institutions like AMU and JMI, people connected to ruling party and their ideology have been placed. They are suppressing freedom of thinking and promoting sectarian cadre in academics. What should a minority student or truth-seeking student should do? I would say, education weighs much higher than these demoralizing conditions. You will find 10-20% students and teachers open minded. Share your sentiments and thoughts with them and focus on studies. Have no disrespect for any teacher, you would win your teachers. A teacher is bound to have sensitivity, without which he/ she can't communicate with students.

Second problem is qualifying the admission test. It is competitive. You prepare for it by (i) clearing the basic concepts through studying from good books (pick one good book for each subject) and (ii) solving problems given at the end of each chapter. Get your practice test evaluated by some teacher or senior student. Admission in polytechnics, including the prestigious ones like JMI, is feasible and tuition is affordable. Getting into B.Tech. in IIT, NIIT is hard and requires coaching which is expensive. However, there are private engineering colleges and good ones like **JIT** (Jehangirabad Institute of Technology, Barabanki) where one can get admission with relative ease. Tuition in

average colleges is Rs. 1 lakh per year and living expenses 60 K. This is high. Cost of entrance preparation would also be Rs. 1 lakh. This is a serious handicap, specially for girls. My suggestion is, those parents who can spare Rs. 10 thousand per month for education, should spend that much and take loan from the bank for the rest. This holds for all professional courses. Muslims participation in professional courses must at least double in next ten years from current low level of 2-3%..

Arts education is timely and deserves serious efforts. It builds perspective to understand social, economic and political developments. Arts students coming from modest background and studying at JNU, have better clarity on social/ political issues than the elites from IIT. Arts education is important to cut down myth and prejudice. I have noted, in most colleges attendance is poor in B.A./ B.Sc. and students go for made easy rather than regular books. This must change. Study good and original books and develop a comprehensive understanding. Never miss a class. Even if chances of getting a job are low, you would develop self confidence and ability to analyze. Take a few computer courses and improve your communication skills. This will improve your employment opportunities.

Third problem is closure of scholarships for economically weaker sections of minorities. In 2009-11, Sadbhav Mission in collaboration with 20 social organizations had carried a campaign for the implementation of Minority Pre-Matric scholarship scheme of the Central Government in Gujarat. Someone went to High Court also. On the order of the court, it was implemented in 2014. The Central government has now stopped it for class I to VIII in the whole country. It has also stopped Maulana Azad National Fellowship for Ph.D. These are serious setbacks and must be reversed.

Fourth problem is negative attitude of the government and sectarian organizations towards Madarsas. These are the traditional schools of learning, catering mostly to the marginalized. They are imbibing in them self-confidence, communication skills and humanism. A majority of the pass outs serve the society as working classes and are known for integrity. I have been holding Annual Maths workshops for Madarsa teachers since 2006, and have found them truthful, sincere and caring. They must be supported to upgrade teaching of math, computer and English.

Education in India needs a reversal of policy. It needs to be inclusive, creative and free from prejudice. Muslims, Hindus and other communities would march together to have it realize.

--

*\*Dr. Vipin Kumar Tripathi is an Indian Plasma physicist and a former Physics professor of the IIT, Delhi. He is the founder of Sadbhav Mission. Professor Tripathi established it in the aftermath of Bhagalpur riots in 1990. This Mission aims to develop a grassroots resistance against communalism and mobilizing people on basic issues like education.*

## Center of Muslim Experience in the US: Transforming Narratives and Strengthening Belonging



Yasmin Saikia\*, Ph.D., Arizona State University

In 2008, on my return to the U.S. from an overseas trip, the immigration officer, a black man who checked my documents, asked me “Where are you from?”, to which I replied, “From North Carolina” because I lived there at the time. He looked at me and without any change in his expression said, “Ms., people like us will never belong here [in the United States].” This incident planted a disturbing thought: why cannot some people belong in the United States? Does one have to be white to fully belong? Or, does religious affiliation determine one’s status of belonging in the U.S.? However, I buried this disturbing incident in my mind, like many other unpleasant encounters that reminded me of my lesser place as a woman, a brown person, a Muslim, and an immigrant to the United States. I did not have the emotional or intellectual capacity to deal with them.

In 2010, when I joined Arizona State University (ASU) as the first holder of the Hardt-Nickachos Distinguished Chair in Peace Studies, I was astounded to find that the overwhelming scholarly discussion on peace and conflict directly or indirectly concerned Muslims. Questions like: Why are most violent extremists Muslims? Is terrorism permitted in Islam? What is *Jihad*? Where are the voices of moderate Muslims who oppose violence? Are there Islamic concepts of peace? These and other questions were of great concern to my academic colleagues who wanted to make sense of the contemporary Muslim world, though more often than not they failed to engage the contexts, such as the War on Terror, neoliberal restructuring, and the support of oppressive dictators that were creating extreme and adverse conditions for people in various Muslim countries. The academic inquiry about Muslims was not inclusive either; the university faculty were not interacting with local Muslim communities to learn from them or hear their stories. ASU is located in the greater Phoenix area where there is a very rich and multicultural Muslim community that is one of the fastest-growing in the United States.

Arizona is home to a variety of Muslim communities who hail from many different parts of the world. They have a very long history in the greater Phoenix Valley, which is nearly one hundred years old that I will discuss in some depth later in this essay. Phoenician Muslims are racially diverse – black, brown, and white; they are born and converted Muslims; the majority of them are citizens, whether naturalized or by birth; they are skilled professionals, business owners, entrepreneurs, public officials, artists, and civil society advocates; Phoenix being the fourth largest refugee receiving city in the US, a large segment of new

emigres are Muslim refugees. There are several thousand American and international Muslim students attending ASU. According to the ASU chaplain and Iman of the Islamic Cultural Center of Tempe, Omar Tawail, before the pandemic, nearly 8,000 Muslim students were attending ASU. This is indeed a very large number, perhaps the largest number of Muslim students in a single university in the United States. Yet, these vast and diverse Muslims who could serve as an important resource for the academics concerned with Muslim issues are visibly absent as participants in the discussions at ASU, the largest public university in the country. The lacuna is not confined to the academic approach, but the Muslim community, too, has not interacted with the university and the tendency has been to stay away. Muslims have established their own organizations and associations to advance the communities’ concerns, but they rarely engage the faculty experts at the university to address and work with them to think forward.

Taking stock of the vast constituency of Muslims in Arizona and my own experiences, both personal and intellectual, urged me to discuss and think with my colleagues about how we can transform the narratives about Muslims, develop and showcase the positive impact of Muslims in the United States and globally, and strengthen a place of belonging for Muslims, particularly for the youth who are the future of the community and the country. To address these concerns and by drawing upon community resources and the support of ASU’s upper administration, we established the Center of Muslim Experience in the U.S. (CME-US) in Fall 2022. I co-direct this center with my husband and colleague, Professor Chad Haines.

Our inspiration comes from Sir Syed’s approach that institution building is key for creating a concerted plan aimed at developing and improving knowledge about Muslims and advancing Muslim lives. We envisage the center will serve as a focal point where all issues related to Muslims in the United States can be explored, studied, discussed, debated, and conceptualized. The knowledge generated at the center will serve the Muslim and non-Muslim public beyond the university by showcasing positive Muslim contributions to the United States. The symbiotic relationship between the academy and community once established can be an invaluable resource for thinking forward together.

The purpose of this center is evident in its name, which is pronounced ‘see-me-us’. As the name suggests, our mission

is to raise awareness about Muslims as part of the “us” in the United States and for Muslims to appreciate the interdependent relationship with the other constituent groups of “us” for learning and working with them to enhance and strengthen the multicultural foundation of the United States. We see our work as a knowledge-building enterprise that can produce positive understandings of Muslims grounding this knowledge in the realities of Muslim lives so that Muslims can claim with pride their place of belonging in the United States, not simply because they live here but because of their contributions and excellence in improving the United States as an inclusive and tolerant place that has a place for everyone at the table.

Our first task toward the realization of this goal is focused on research. We are researching media narratives and engaging the youth to develop new and different stories of Muslims for producing a toolkit for wider distribution in the United States and globally. Another project is focused on how we can improve the leadership role of Muslim women students at both the professional and community levels. A third project is a comparative study of Muslim communities in Western and Asian democracies, paying particular attention to the threatened Muslim minorities. Our fourth research project focuses on historical issues. This latter one is very exciting because it has helped us to unearth an unknown history of Muslims in the greater Phoenix Valley and their remarkable contribution to rethinking American citizenship.

Citizenship in the United States is a hotly debated issue today as it was in the past. The Exclusion Act of 1924 barred Asians from becoming citizens of the United States and only white and black people were entitled to this privileged status. Thousands of Asians, however, were working, supporting, and growing the United States economy but they were not citizens. One such group was the South Asians or East Indians as they were known then. Mubarek Ali Khan who hailed from the United Provinces of colonial British India and came to the U.S. sometime in the early 1920s was the most vocal and steadfast advocate for the naturalization of South Asians as American citizens.

Khan was born on September 9, 1898, in the United Provinces in British India. From his letters to newspapers, we learn he was arrested in 1912 when he was barely 14 years old for leading a lower-caste student rally in UP demanding access to education. In 1923, he went to New York, where he opened an “import shop” of exotic goods from India. Quickly, he commenced his political work and in 1937, he founded the India Welfare League and moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where he expanded the league’s membership. The majority of the members were Muslim farmers living in Arizona and California. In the unforgiving desert soil, these men grew lettuce, melon, cantaloupe, wheat, and alfalfa and contributed to increasing food production and the agricultural economy while also working on civil advocacy matters of citizenship and increasing international student exchanges.

Being proficient in English and keenly aware of the political exclusion of South Asians, Mubarek Ali played a leadership role in representing the Muslim settlers. He wrote to senators, congressmen, governors, and influential businessmen to repel the Exclusion Act of 1924 and naturalize all Indians residing in the United States. In 1943, he was able to convince North Dakota’s Senator William Langor to champion this cause. Khan toured with Langor across Arizona and Southern California and showed him how Indian farmers were contributing to American life. He also took him to New York where Langor met a variety of educated Indians, including Jagjit Singh who would play an important role in the naturalization of Indians. Between 1939 and 1946, Khan testified eight times before the U.S. Senate Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. With the support of Senator Langor, Congresswoman Clare Booth Luce and New York Representative Emmanuel Celler co-sponsored the Luce-Celler bill for the naturalization of Asians that was signed into law on July 2, 1946, by President Truman. Although the Luce-Celler Act adopted Singh’s suggestion of a quota-based entry of educated Indians, it also accepted Khan’s demand for naturalizing 4,200 Indians already residing in the U.S. This was an amazing accomplishment of a Muslim Indian who created the pathway for millions of South Asians to become naturalized citizens of the United States since then. Mubarek Ali Khan died in 1963 and was buried in Section 11 in Greenway Cemetery in Phoenix, along with 26 other Muslims who were the pioneers of the Muslim community in Arizona.

Along with research on Muslim contributions, at CME-US we are also focusing on community engagement. During Ramadan, in March 2023, we assisted MSA in installing an illuminated crescent moon in Tempe’s A-mountain. After two decades of absence in the public life of Tempe, this illuminated symbol announced the Muslim month of fasting and the celebration of Eid. During the NFL games in February 2023, we hosted an interfaith community discussion led by several players on ‘Faith and Football’. Also, supported by a grant from the AZ Humanities Council, in 2024, we will host an Eid dinner to discuss best practices for integrating Muslims within the wider AZ community.

Student success is the third area of our work and we are training students in oral history to conduct interviews and document various aspects of Muslim socio-cultural and economic life. With a grant from the American Council of Learned Society, next year we will train students to prepare a toolkit for media use focusing on empowering narratives about Muslims. These are some of the initial work we have started at the center.

Our future work targeted for the next three years is more ambitious and encompassing. We will appoint several non-resident fellows to undertake research nationally focusing on five cities—New York, Chicago, Dallas, San Jose, and Phoenix showcasing unique features of Muslim diversity, civic engagement, spiritual work, entrepreneurship, and

advocacy. Another project is a national network of Muslim scholars and students to connect and support professional advancement. Alongside, we will continue the study of Muslim lived experiences to produce new and positive narratives about Muslims nationally and globally for countering the negative stereotypes produced by the Islamophobic industry, develop teaching tools to advance student learning, contribute to public knowledge through outreach, interfaith dialogue, and by engaging media, organize cultural events, and start work on developing a digital museum showcasing the contributions of multiple Muslim communities.

---

*\*Yasmin Saikia holds the endowed Hardt-Nickachos Chair in Peace Studies and is a Professor of History at ASU. She co-directs CME-US with Chad Haines. Yasmin hails from Assam and is an AMU alum (1980-86). Yasmin served as the Vice President (1982-83) and President (1983-84) of the Women's College Student Union and Senior Hall of Abdullah Hall (1985-86).*

Our work, we hope will dispel the darkness of ignorance about Muslims and shine a spotlight on Muslim contributions in the United States and globally. We see this as upholding Sir Syed's call to illuminate the mind and benefit humanity. Connecting knowledge (*ilm*) and work (*'amal*) is one of the basic principles of Islamic ethics. Keeping this ethic at the forefront of our work reaffirms our commitment to Sir Syed to be partners in spreading the light of knowledge and dignifying the community of Muslims and humanity as a whole. We invite you to join our efforts by visiting our website and seeing ways you can participate and contribute to the work of CME-US ([cme.asu.edu](http://cme.asu.edu)).

## Bulldog Insurance: An Alig's Entrepreneurial Success Story and A Legacy of Personalized Protection

Established in 1992, Bulldog Insurance is a distinguished insurance firm located in Atlanta, Georgia. Founded by Azfar Haque\*, a distinguished alumnus of Aligarh Muslim University, the company has solidified its reputation as a leading player in the insurance industry. Mr. Haque's unwavering energy, determination, drive, and exceptional intelligence have been instrumental in the remarkable growth of Bulldog Insurance.

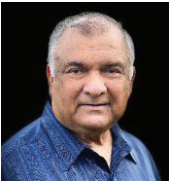
Initially specializing in auto and life insurance, Bulldog Insurance swiftly diversified its offerings to encompass a comprehensive suite of insurance services. Today, the company extends its coverage to clients across 38 states within the United States, and its reach extends to offshore locations. Bulldog Insurance's portfolio includes auto insurance, home insurance, life insurance, health insurance, commercial insurance, workmen compensation insurance, and various other insurance products.

At the heart of Bulldog Insurance lies a team of seasoned insurance industry professionals, collectively boasting more than three decades of experience. This dedicated team is deeply committed to delivering highly personalized services to clients. The primary mission of Bulldog Insurance is to identify and mitigate clients' exposure to risk. This mission is executed through an unwavering focus on providing top-tier coverage, competitive premium rates, and simplifying intricate insurance matters.

What distinguishes Bulldog Insurance from its peers is its innovative approach. Leveraging advanced machine learning algorithms and statistical data analysis, the company conducts a thorough assessment of each client's unique insurance needs. This analytical rigor enables the firm to craft responsible, tailor-made protection programs, recommending insurance solutions that are not only cost-effective but also provide comprehensive coverage against unforeseen, life-altering events.

Central to Bulldog Insurance's ethos is its commitment to customer service. The company prioritizes helping clients align their insurance coverage with their individual requirements, eschewing generic, one-size-fits-all policies. Bulldog Insurance is proud of its legacy of serving families and businesses of all sizes, spanning multiple generations.

*\*Served as Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta President (1991-92)*



## My journey from Ghazipur to Alpharetta

Zia Siddiqi\*, Ph.D., Board Certified Entomologist Emeritus

Ghazipur, UP, India is my birthplace, and I spent my childhood, schooling, and higher education in Rajasthan due to my father's employment at the Indian Railways. During nearly the last eight decades hopping the continents, either for advancing my academic background or for employment, now I call Alpharetta, GA, USA my home. The following is a brief overview of my journey from Ghazipur to Alpharetta and in between career highlights ending in the current retirement phase of my life.

### Academic Background

Early education was completed in Rajasthan: Higher Secondary from Ajmer, and B.Sc. Agriculture from University of Udaipur. While doing my undergraduate in agriculture, what fascinated me the most was the damage done to field crops by insects that led me to learn more about how to protect field crops from damage by insect pests (back then it was part of the green revolution), and thus decided to pursue my Master's in Entomology (study of insects) at University of Rajasthan in Jaipur. While in the last phase of completing my master's degree, I was offered an R&D position to work with a multinational pesticide company. At that point in time, the objective was to establish field research centers in India to evaluate newer pesticides, under natural field environment to protect the field crops, especially from insect damage. When I met my manager head of the R&D, who had just returned from overseas with a doctoral degree, made me think that if I need to lead the R&D unit then I need a doctoral degree. This motivated me to explore the opportunities to pursue a doctoral degree in Entomology (economic entomology – crop protection), probably from overseas.

The dream of pursuing my doctoral degree in the USA led me to leave the multinational pesticide firm's R&D position and join The Rockefeller Foundation's that was running Agricultural Development Program based in Hyderabad. One of the senior American research scientists at The Rockefeller Foundation assisted me in exploring and guided to meet the admission requirements at various US universities namely TOEFL, GRE (both general and advanced). Once I secured admission and research fellowship at the North Carolina State University at Raleigh, I applied and got a travel grant from The Nizam Trust in Hyderabad. My doctoral research was on tobacco to study and evaluate the natural resistance that tobacco varieties may have for insect damage, especially the tobacco budworm. Once identified, then these attributes would be used to breed naturally resistant crop plants, a phenomenon known as host plant resistance and thus reduce the pesticide application.

### Memorable African Experience

After obtaining my doctoral degree in Entomology and completing a post-doctoral fellowship I was offered an opportunity to work as an Entomologist in West Africa based in Nigeria. This appointment was at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan. IITA and other similar research institutes are based in Mexico (CIMMYT for wheat), the Philippines (IRRI for Rice), Peru (CIP for potato), and India (ICRISAT for various subtropical crops). These research centers are located within 10 degrees north/south of the equator, the so-called greenbelt, with the objective to increase agricultural production to feed the ever-growing human population. These research centers are operated by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR based in France) and funded by several global agencies including FAO, UNDP (United Nations Development Program), and the USDA, etc. Its mission is to be a global research partnership for a food secure future.

My work took me to most of the West African countries to survey and document types of insects that damage various field crops especially rice. After a two-year mission in West Africa, I also spent six months in East Africa based in Tanzania. This has been one of my memorable life experiences as I got to travel by road through the interior of these countries: Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Ghana, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, and Tanzania, etc.

I could have continued working with these international agricultural development missions, but these assignments were mostly on a contractual basis, and I needed to settle down and start a family.

### Return to North America

My decision to return to North America was to seek a more career-oriented position. My first assignment was as a Technical Director at a Canadian pest control company – PCO Services Ltd. Later this was acquired by a US firm (Wisconsin based SC Johnson Wax, Inc.) and I was relocated to Florida. This was not just a thermal shock but a big cultural shock as well to experience Latin culture. Eventually, the Atlanta based pest control company Orkin (owned by a publicly traded Rollins, Inc.) acquired the business and moved me to Atlanta. As a Quality Systems Director for their ever-growing commercial division led me to spend the next twenty-five years protecting public health and property and grow the food safety business. At this point in time, Rollins is one of the largest global pest management companies with presence in more than 70 countries. Interestingly when I started working for Orkin in 1999, its annual revenue was just around \$600 million, and now

it's over \$2 Billion. My career at Rollins took me across USA and Canada, and to several other countries while based in Toronto, Miami, and Atlanta.

### **There were some Key Accomplishments**

During my tenure at Rollins, including the mergers and acquisitions, as their North American Technical and QA Director I had the following major career accomplishments:

- Registered a first pest management program under the ISO9000 quality system in Canada and then expanded into the USA.
- Designed and implemented top notch pest program for highly sensitive industries including health and food processing. This was and has been complementing food safety since the implantation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) by the FDA. FSMA changed food safety from a reactionary mode to a proactive preventive mode. It also covers the foreign food suppliers.
- Served in the Academic Advisory Committee of a community college (Sir Sanford Fleming College) in Ontario Canada and later chaired its Academic Advisory Committee.
- Life Long Honorary member of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors.
- Appointed as a Technical Advisor, for nearly seven years, for the Vector Control and Zoonotic section of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA).
- Elected as the Director of Entomological Society of America's Certification Board.
- Authored the recommended practices for Integrated Pest Management for the Association of Healthcare Environment and American Hospital Association.
- As a subject matter expert, guided the team of IT professionals to develop an in-house software system to collect service data, and thus generating various reports.
- Wrote several technical articles for industry publications.
- Etc.

### **Shifting focus from R&D to Establishing Formulation Plants**

One of the interesting assignments during my stay in Canada was to work on a Technology Transfer Program from the Canadian International Development Agency – CIDA. It was centered around helping local interested business entities to establish a domestic pesticide formulation plant. This would encourage using several locally available resources rather than buying already formulated products thus reducing the foreign exchange requirement. Basically, the pesticide industry is like the pharmaceutical industry, when the patent expires

several generics come in the market at much reduced cost. Similar principle applies to pesticides. Typically, multinationals would like to sell their formulated products to these developing countries placing a foreign exchange burden. Establishing a local pesticide formulation plant would still require the “active ingredient” from generic manufacturers in China, India, and Israel, etc. and utilize the other ingredients and packaging material available locally. These projects involved leading a team of people to conduct a feasibility study, identifying local businesses, and understanding the local needs, etc. Then CIDA would advance funds under the Technology Transfer Program. These missions took me to several countries like: Gabon, Cameroun, Malawi, Thailand, Brazil, several European countries, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, India, and Pakistan. It was very interesting to learn the local customs and traditions.

### **Retirement and Post Retirement Activities**

I decided to take a voluntary retirement from Rollins, as it does not have a mandatory retirement age. Since then, I have been able to offer my technical expertise on a consulting basis. While I have several assignments, the key ones include working as a Technical Expert for an ERP software developer for pest control operations. It also had a major use in public health for vector control for the state and local mosquito control agencies.

One of my post-retirement engagements was to be appointed as a Technical Consultant to the International Pest Control Magazine published by Research Information Ltd. based in Buckinghamshire, UK. I had the opportunity to write several technical articles for them as well.

Another post-retirement assignment is to technically support an ultrasonic rodent repelling device manufacturer based in Eastern Canada. Rodents (rats and mice), hear in the ultrasonic frequency range, and making the sound intensity over 90 decibels would be like a 747-jet flying over them and thus repel the rodents. This is a very controversial pest control tool as there are many “cheaper” versions that claim to repel any and every type of pest without any effective sound output and proven efficacy.

### **Writing a Book Chapter**

Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau International (CAB International), based in Oxfordshire UK and Boston USA, is an intergovernmental, not-for-profit organization that improves people's lives worldwide by providing information and applying scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment. Its approach involves putting information, skills, and tools into people's hands. CAB International's 49 member countries guide and influence its work which is delivered by scientific staff based in our global network of centers.

CAB International invited me to write a chapter on Advances in Pest Control Products and Services in Urban Pest Management in their recent book (September 2023) titled Urban Pest Management: An Environmental Perspective 2<sup>nd</sup>

Edition. It was an honor and privilege for me to author this chapter.

### **Last but not the least**

While I didn't have the privilege to attend the AMU, but all my late maternal uncles (Shah Mashhood Alam, Shah Masud Alam,

----

Shah Mamdooh Alam, and Shah Manzoor Alam) were all Aligarians. Even my father-in-law a cricketer, the late Padam Shri Capt. Mushtaq Ali was also an Aligarian. Since relocating to the Atlanta area nearly quarter of a century ago, I had the pleasure of and cherish meeting and socializing with the local Aligarians and attending various ongoing cultural events sponsored by the Atlanta chapter of the Aligarh alums.

## **Embracing Legacy and Community: A Daughter's Perspective on Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta**



Maham Ahmad\*, Atlanta

As the daughter of a distinguished Aligarh alumnus, I find myself immersed in the rich culture and the warmth of the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) community. The AAAA is not just an organization to me—it is a second home, a community that embodies the principles of education, engagement, and legacy. This non-profit organization is a testament to the enduring spirit of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and the vision of its founder, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Rooted in the ethos of the Sir Syed Tahreek, AAAA is not merely an association—it is a community that embodies the principles of education, community engagement, and legacy.

One cannot help but be captivated by the warmth and love that radiates from every member of AAAA. Stepping into their gatherings, I am often the youngest attendee, yet my presence is met with genuine enthusiasm. Their eyes light up, and I am embraced by a community that transcends generational gaps. These highly esteemed individuals, who could easily rest on the success of their accomplishments, instead chose to extend their wisdom to me. It is a privilege to absorb their advice and insights as they generously share the experiences that have shaped their lives.

What distinguishes AAAA is not just their commitment to charity but also their unwavering pride in AMU. Despite the geographical distance from the grounds of AMU, these charismatic alumni carry the torch of pride for their alma mater. The cultural events they host not only celebrate the traditions of AMU but also serve as a platform to raise awareness about the institution's contributions to Atlanta. It is heartening to witness how they seamlessly blend their allegiance to AMU with a keen awareness of current affairs in both the United States and India.

The essence of AAAA's impact extends beyond its events and initiatives; it permeates the very fabric of the community. The association actively engages in charitable, literary, and educational activities, including annual academic exchange programs, student scholarship initiatives, eid picnics, and collaborations with local organizations on cultural and educational fronts. What stands out most is their dedication to nurturing the next generation, including me. Through their

commitment to community engagement, AAAA ensures that the legacy of Sir Syed remains vibrant and relevant.

Volunteering at their events has given me a front-row seat to witness the camaraderie among these distinguished individuals. They are not merely associates but best buddies bound by shared experiences and a common love for their alma mater. Their unity serves as a beacon for what community truly means—a support system transcending time, distance, and backgrounds.

My father stands in the heart of this organization, a testament to the values instilled by AMU. His journey, marked by acceptance into one of India's most prestigious Universities and his relentless pursuit of excellence, mirrors the very essence of AAAA. His intelligence is unparalleled, and though I haven't walked the halls of AMU myself, I carry myself with pride that he is an alumnus. He is committed to implementing the knowledge and values gained at AMU in Atlanta and does his best to pass them down to me as well.

In conclusion, the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta is not just an organization; it is a living testament to the enduring legacy of Aligarh Muslim University. AAAA bridges the gap between the past and the future through its commitment to education, charity culture, and community engagement. As a beneficiary of their wisdom, love, and support, I am not just a witness to their efforts—I am a proud participant in a community that cherishes its past, celebrates its present, and shapes its future with an unwavering commitment to the ideals of Sir Syed.

--

*\* Maham Ahmad holds a BS in Biology and an MPH from Emory University. She works at Emory University Rollins School of Public Health, Atlanta, GA*

## The *Filmī-‘ilmī* Formula: *Shama* Magazine and the Urdu Cosmopolis

[https://brill.com/view/journals/urds/1/2/article-p177\\_3.xml?rskey=iJoJG5&result=5](https://brill.com/view/journals/urds/1/2/article-p177_3.xml?rskey=iJoJG5&result=5)

*Shama* (Candle) was founded in 1939 by Yusuf Dehlvi. The origin of *Shama*, or rather its origin myth, reveals a peculiar form of cultural hybridity that was to characterize the magazine itself, as well as its readership and the Urdu public it engendered. According to Yusuf's eldest son, Younus, the family traces its roots to the Punjabi city of Multan, a renowned center of Sufi culture. At some point in the nineteenth century, one scion of this family settled in Shāhjahānābād (Old Delhi) in the area now called Habash Khan and took on the "Dehlvi" surname. The family retained its allegiance to its Sufi *pīr silsilah* (master's lineage) while becoming major leather dealers and investing in real estate.<sup>11</sup>

When *Shama* began publication in 1939, it was conceived as a combination religious and literary magazine, with a fairly conservative editorial policy reflecting the Muslim piety of Yusuf Dehlvi and his family. According to Younus, it was his father Yusuf's *pīr* 'Azīz ur-Raḥmān Pānīpatī himself who first suggested that he replace the religious component of the magazine with material on "bioscope," the Urdu-Hindi film industry.

*Shama* maintained its hybrid identity throughout its existence; I call this hybrid identity the "*filmī-‘ilmī* (cinematic-scientific) formula." *Filmī* is a somewhat disparaging term for anything related to the world of cinema, while *‘ilmī* comes from the Urdu-Arabic *‘ilm*, connoting scientific knowledge in general or any subfield thereof, including belles-lettres or religious knowledge. As the twentieth century progressed, it was this underlying tension between *Shama*'s film-industry livelihood and its appeal to the Muslim intelligentsia that drove its popularity.

*Shama* was by no means the only magazine that focused on emerging Indian cinema. The 1920s and 1930s had witnessed the birth of the Indian film journalism industry and in addition to features and columns in daily newspapers, 68 film journals were in print by 1938.<sup>15</sup> These journals were published primarily in English or Urdu, in the major film production centers of Bombay, Calcutta, and Lahore, as well as in the colonial capital, Delhi.<sup>16</sup> Debashree Mukherjee argues that while early film journalism took on diverse forms ranging from scandal columns to critical reviews, it participated in the construction of modernity by relating film to social issues of concern in pre- and post-Independence India.<sup>17</sup> *Shama*, by virtue of its hybrid format, asserted the pivotal role of the film industry in constructing the Urdu cosmopolis and defining South Asian modernity.

Yusuf Dehlvi's adoption of the *filmī-‘ilmī* formula makes sense on a number of levels. The relationship between literature and film is buttressed by the Indian film industry's extensive use of poetry in the form of song lyrics, as well as the practice of basing film screenplays on novels and plays. Many of the writers whose poems and short stories were published in *Shama* also worked in the film industry. But at another level, this duality underscores one of the main contradictions inherent in Indian modernity: the tension between popular culture and the progressive literary movement. We will encounter this contradiction in *Shama* both in its content and its cover paintings.

Three generations of Dehlvis were involved in *Shama*'s management: Yusuf, the founder; his three sons, Younus, Idrees, and Ilyas; as well as some of their wives and children. Despite the dynastic corporate structure, *Shama* was the first monthly Indian journal of any kind in any language to surpass the 100,000-subscribers milestone, which it did, according to Younus, as early as 1949. *Shama*'s peak circulation is unknown: the company's financial records did not survive the closing of the *Shama* office in 1999. *Shama*'s early commercial success led to a number of spin-off publications under the *Shama* umbrella. These included *Bāno* (Lady), a magazine specifically for women, *Khilaunā* (Toy) for children, the crime/spy magazine *Mujrim* (Criminal), and others. Several magazines were patterned after successful American magazines, including *Ā'īnah* (Mirror), a copy-cat version of *Life*, and *Shabistān* (Bedroom), an imitation of *Reader's Digest*.

More challenging to *Shama*'s prosperity, perhaps, was the slow transformation of the public's perception of the Urdu language itself, from the dominant *lingua franca* and literary language of South Asia to the marginalized language of a religious minority. I argue that *Shama* was able to weather this sea change precisely because it held firmly to its risqué—albeit middlebrow—image, and its ability to court a wide readership by deploying its trademark hybrid formula. Indeed, many of my interlocutors testify to the fact that Urdu was able to retain its secular, cosmopolitan associations into the twenty-first century largely through the intervention of *Shama* magazine.

As Urdu readership slowly declined through the 1960s, the Dehlvis launched a Hindi version of *Shama*, called *Sushamā* (Splendour); the name was chosen because of the phonemic similarity. In retrospect, this marketing concession to the nationalist project of establishing Hindi as the primary official language of India may have marked the beginning of the end for *Shama* and *Sushamā* alike: the *Shama* brand was too closely intertwined with Urdu. When I asked Younus Dehlvi about his family's role in promoting Urdu and sustaining the Urdu reading public through the twentieth century, he laughed and told me that for them it was just a business. They were entrepreneurs, and as long as the Urdu public remained faithful, their magazines survived: "We didn't even know that we were serving the language. When people said this, we answered, 'As you like.' Our attention was elsewhere."<sup>20</sup>

At the time of its collapse in 1999, the *Shama* empire included nine monthly publications: four Urdu/Hindi pairs (*Shama/Sushamā*, *Bāno/Sushmitā*, *Khilaunā/Dost aur Dostī*, *Mujrim/Doshī*) and the digest *Shabistān*. The offices were closed when the business failed and were inhabited only by monkeys and drug addicts for almost twenty years.

Each issue of *Shama* is divided into two sections. The *filmī* section comes first, followed by the literary section. The first four or five pages of each issue are taken up by full-page photos of actresses (and occasionally actors). Beneath every photo is a couplet of Urdu poetry that converses with the photo, alluding to the subject's beauty or emotional state, or to the assumed reaction of the viewer.

*Maḥabbat kā tum se aṣar kyā kahūñ  
Naẓar mil ga'ī dil dharakne lagā*<sup>36</sup>

What can I say about the effect of your love?  
Our eyes met and my heart started to pound

At the very end of each issue we find one of *Shama*'s most famous features, the participatory "Adabī Mu'ammah" (Literary Crossword Puzzle), which in March 1959 bore a prize of 15,000 rupees, over 100,000 rupees in today's currency.

Throughout its existence, *Shama* was designed to appeal to a wide readership and it assembled its far-flung subscribers into a virtual community, a thriving Urdu public: the "Bazm-e *Shama*." In its heyday, *Shama* had branches in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, England, and various cities in the Middle East. The expansion of *Shama* beyond India's borders is evidence that long after Independence, Urdu persisted as a transnational language, linking Urdu readers in India, Pakistan, and the diaspora. Moreover, *Shama*'s pursuit of market share had several unintentional effects that made an impact on twentieth-century Indian culture in significant ways. First, *Shama* sustained Urdu print culture despite the ascendance of government-sanctioned Hindi. Second, it resisted the Islamization of Urdu itself by including non-Muslim writers and making Urdu essential to discourses about film, popular culture, and modernity. Third, by linking cinema to literature and progressive writing, it enhanced the film industry's cultural capital and critical respect.

Our journey through the pages of *Shama* reveals several notable features of the post-Independence Urdu cosmopolis. First, the *Shama* era marked an important phase in the evolution of the cosmopolis, a phase that had emerged from the fractures of nationalism and communalism but not yet confronted the digitally mediated present described by Dubrow.<sup>46</sup> Urdu had managed to assert its status as the primary language of film and popular culture in South Asia, but this had entailed a shift away from a literary elite to a largely middle-class Urdu readership. This readership was, however, more diverse and more tolerant than that of the earlier period, and more adaptive to post-Independence notions of national integration and transnational multicultural modernity.

Second, *Shama* is distinguished from other manifestations of the Urdu cosmopolis by its emphasis on visuality. Photographs of actress, sketches of women, cover paintings of women, advertisements featuring women—as argued above, all of these contributed to the scopophilia of the publication. But there is a more subtle effect at work in *Shama*'s pages: the Urdu script itself, Nasta'liq, is deployed in tandem with the images in a symbiotic way such that its sinuous curves acquire—by association or reflection—a certain feminine aesthetic. Inderjeet's illustrations blend visually with his title calligraphy, and the title calligraphy blends with the textual content that throughout *Shama*'s publication history was produced by calligraphers (*kātib*) rather than set in type. Although Urdu is a language that in some contexts is meant to be heard and not seen, *Shama* foregrounds Nasta'liq as the dominant vehicle for Urdu written expression. This perhaps explains why the parallel Hindi publications like *Sushamā* remained mere reflections of their more glamorous sisters.

Third, *Shama* was the terrain upon which various contradictions and paradoxes of modernity played out, particularly those surrounding religion and gender. I have discussed at length

how *Shama* both objectified women and invested them with subjective agency, not only as readers, authors, and consumers, but also as wielders of the *tirchhī naẓar* visualized on the covers. Meanwhile, *Shama* helped to articulate what might be called "Muslim modernism." This was a mode of negotiated identity based on language and history as much as on religion, and certain contradictions arose out of the negotiation process. For example, if Urdu is classed as a religious minority language within India's linguistic salad bowl, then its speakers may be perceived as constituting an ethnicity, thus becoming prey to communalism. On the other hand, if Urdu is a language of nostalgia, bearing a legacy of poetry and elitism, then it will be made obsolete by the surge of modernity. In *Shama*, though, we find that while Urdu inscribes both piety and nostalgia, it is perpetually reinvented as a cosmopolitan, secular, and inclusive language, deriving its organic power from the most modern of art forms, film.

Yusuf Dehlvi passed away in 1985. With the death of the patriarch, the various *Shama* publications began competing against each other,<sup>47</sup> even as the Urdu cosmopolis was disrupted by economic liberalization and globalization. To some extent, *Shama*'s downfall was caused by the fact that it was Urdu-dependent and that Urdu readership was dwindling, but *Shama*'s place was not taken by Hindi or English publications. Rather, radio and television emerged to do the work of bringing film news and reviews to the Indian public. With the advent of the internet, readership dwindled even more rapidly. Another set of factors for the decline of *Shama* derives from the family culture of the Dehlvi family itself. According to Mohsin Dehlvi, he and his siblings and cousins were kept away from the film world, exiled from the Urdu cosmopolis.<sup>48</sup> Even as stars were staying at the family mansion in Delhi, the children were discouraged from watching Indian films or reading vernacular languages. The causes of *Shama*'s demise were manifold: family politics, language and culture wars, internal and external competition, resources being spread too thin, the challenges of juggling a diverse portfolio of businesses, the advent of television and the internet, and the dwindling supply of new Urdu writers to replace those who had moved on after using *Shama* to achieve fame.

*Shama* shut down almost overnight in December 1999. The editors walked in one morning and said, "Enough, we're closing down."<sup>49</sup> The workers had seen it coming. For the next twenty years, passers-by on Asaf Ali Road saw monkeys and tree branches peeping through the broken office windows. Most of the records in the office were lost or destroyed, except for a few small stacks of the last few issues scattered amidst the debris.

In the very first issue of *Shama* in 1939, the following couplet was used as an epigraph:

*lo sham ' hu'ī raushan āne lage parvāne  
āghāz to acchhā hai anjām khudā jāne*<sup>50</sup>

The candle is lit, the moths begin to arrive  
A good beginning, God knows if it will survive

In the end, *Shama* was extinguished not so much by an abundance of moths, but rather by a convergence of inimical winds arising from the storm of modernity. The Urdu cosmopolis would persist in different guises, but never with the flair and power that it had in the golden age of *Shama*.

**Citation:** Journal of Urdu Studies 1, 2 (2020) ; [10.1163/26659050-12340016](https://doi.org/10.1163/26659050-12340016)

## **Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa**

### Architects of Cultural Legacy in Atlanta

In the vibrant tapestry of the Atlanta Aligarh Alumni Association (AAAA), two individuals stand out as not only esteemed alumni but also as founding pillars – Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa. Their journey, from early education in India to becoming active members of AAAA, is a narrative woven with cultural richness and dedication.

#### **Early Years and Education: A Foundation for Excellence**

Wahid Bhai, born in 1936 in Meerut, India, and Talat Aapa, born in 1939 in Aligarh, India, embarked on their educational journeys in the 1940s. Wahid Bhai's early education at Faiz-e-Aam in Meerut laid the groundwork for his academic pursuits at Meerut College. Meanwhile, Talat Aapa's formative years took shape at the Muslim Girls School in Aligarh, with a family deeply rooted in the legacy of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

#### **Venturing Across Oceans: USA Beckons**

The path to the United States diverged for Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa, each driven by unique circumstances. In 1976, Wahid Bhai's professional journey led him to New York, NY, as the Finance Manager at Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). In contrast, Talat Aapa's relocation to the USA was propelled by her husband's job transfer.

#### **Diverse Careers in a New Land**

Wahid Bhai's career trajectory in the USA was marked by versatility. From PIA to Colony Square Hotel, Nation's Bank, and eventually establishing himself as a self-employed professional, his contributions resonated across various sectors. Talat Aapa, on the other hand, embraced the role of a devoted homemaker, nurturing her family with care and dedication.

#### **Founding Members of AAAA: Nurturing Cultural Roots**

Introduced to the Atlanta Aligarh Alumni Association by friends Rukhsana and Waseem, Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa became integral to the association's fabric. While not occupying elected positions, their commitment shone through as enthusiastic volunteers, contributing to the vibrant tapestry of AAAA. For Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa, AAAA became a canvas for countless cherished memories. From Mushairas and Adabi Nashists to concerts, picnics, and gatherings with fellow founding members, the association became a haven for those who shared a passion for culture and literature.

#### **Hosting Poets: A Memorable Encounter**

A notable chapter in Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa's association with AAAA centers around hosting the renowned poet, Jaun Elia. Famed for his profound verses and unconventional lifestyle, Jaun Elia's stay at Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa's residence became a memorable and enlightening experience.

During his visit, Jaun Elia fell unwell, prompting Dr. Khalid Siddiq's recommendation for a remedy involving alcohol. Despite their own cultural practices, Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa navigated this challenge with cultural sensitivity. They sought the assistance of a friend to ensure Jaun Elia could obtain the necessary remedy at a local bar.

This incident not only highlights the unique challenges of hosting individuals from diverse backgrounds but also reflects the compassionate spirit that prevailed in the face of these differences. The narrative of Jaun Elia's stay became a testament to the delicate balance between respecting one another's needs and fostering genuine hospitality within the multicultural tapestry that AAAA aimed to weave.

#### **Contributions, Advice, and Legacy Building**

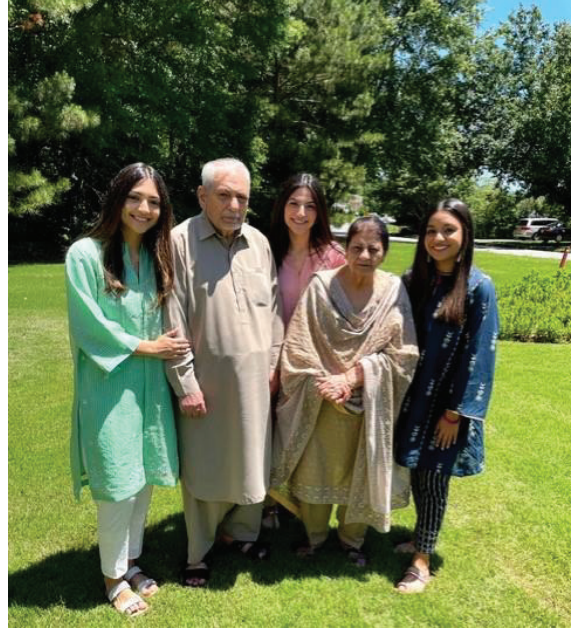
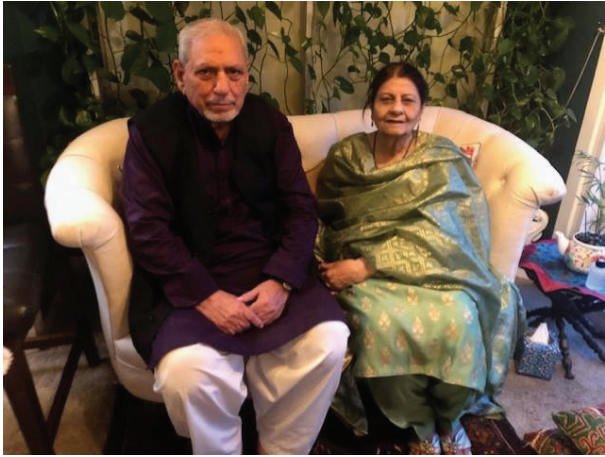
While specific accomplishments during their tenure may not be spotlighted, Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa express their joy in being part of AAAA's events. Their encouragement for the younger generation to actively engage in cultural and literary pursuits echoes a desire to pass on the torch of heritage and linguistic richness.

#### **Closing Thoughts: Preserving Culture for Generations to Come**

As Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa extend their heartfelt wishes for AAAA's continued success, their call for the preservation of Urdu language and cultural legacies resounds. In their closing thoughts, they underscore the importance of the younger generation embracing and continuing the association's commendable work.

Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa's narrative within AAAA encapsulates the essence of community, cultural preservation, and a commitment to fostering a legacy that transcends borders and generations. In the heart of Atlanta, they stand as beacons, illuminating the path for those who follow, ensuring that the flame of cultural heritage continues to burn brightly.

-Editor



**Top (L to R):** Wahid Bhai and Talat Aapa, With Their Family

**Middle (L to R):** With their Family, At 2021 Bazme-Adab Atlanta Event.

**Bottom:** 2023 AAAA Annual Mushira Post-Event at Comfort Inn

# FOTOFREAKS

Aziz Ajaney

470-519-8180

[aziz@fotofreaks.net](mailto:aziz@fotofreaks.net)

[www.fotofreaks.net](http://www.fotofreaks.net)

*Fotofreaks Aziz*

- Fashion • Commercial Photography
- Food • Headshots • Corporate
- Wedding • Family Portrait • Videography

470 519 8180  
www.fotofreaks.net  
aziz@fotofreaks.net

@fotofreaksaziz @azizajaney

## AAAA Event Photos



**Top:** Reception Event for Visiting Delegation from the Indian State of Tamilnadu

**Bottom (Left):** AAAA Members at the Community Reception of New Atlanta Consul-General, Hon. Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan

**Bottom (Right):** 2023 Eid Milan Participants



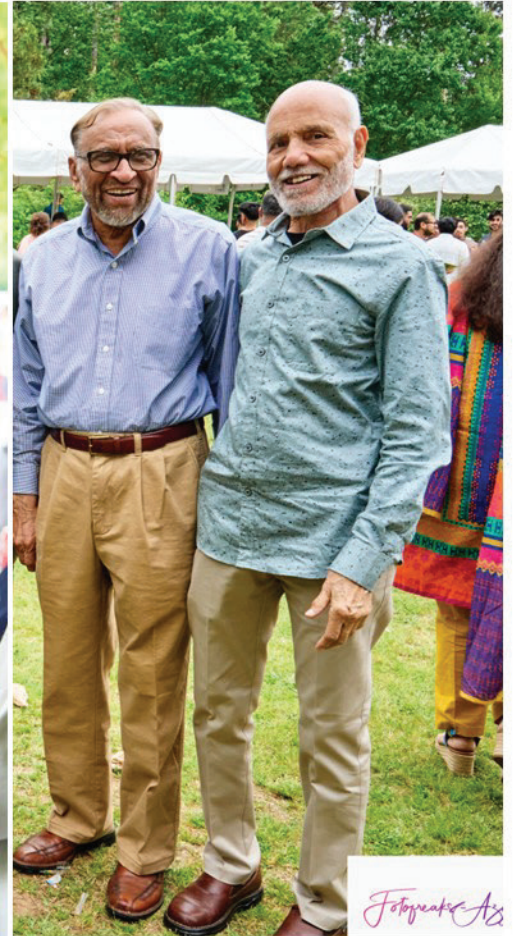
**Top:** AAAA Booth at 2023 Festival of India Celebration

**Bottom:** Post 2023 Jashne-Urdu Event

2023 Eid Milan at Pinckneyville Park , Gwinnett County, GA



2023 Eid Milan at Pinckneyville Park , Gwinnett County, GA



2023 Eid Milan at Pinckneyville Park , Gwinnett County, GA





**Top:** 2023 Jashn-e-Urdu (International Mushaira)

**Bottom:** Post 2023 Jashn-e-Urdu Event

## 2023 Jashn-e-Urdu



**Top:** Jashn-e-Urdu Event (L to R). M. Inamullah (Nazim-e-Mushaira), Tariq Sabzwari (Pakistan), Dr. Rajesh Reddy (India), A.M. Turaz (India), Dr. A. Abdullah (Washington DC).

**Bottom:** Members Receiving Recognition Awards

## 2023 Jashn-e-Urdu



## In Memorium

### Dr. Zafar Israili 1935-2023



Dr. Zafar H. Israili, a distinguished Professor in the Department of Medicine at Emory University School of Medicine, passed away in Atlanta on May 3, 2023. He was a revered figure on the Emory University campus for over 50 years, leaving an indelible mark on the institution.

Born in India, Dr. Israili immigrated to the United States in 1961, bringing with him a wealth of academic achievements. He earned a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science from Aligarh Muslim University in 1951 and 1953, respectively. His scholarly endeavors were recognized when he was honored as a merit scholar in 1953 and served as a senior research scholar from 1954 to 1957. During this period, he contributed significantly as a research associate and junior science officer for the Atomic Energy Commission of India, earning a gold medal for his master's level coursework.

Driven by a deep-seated passion for medicine instilled by his father, a practitioner of Indian medicine, Dr. Israili initially pursued nuclear engineering studies in Kansas. However, inspired by his father's legacy, he redirected his path and earned a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Kansas in 1968. Following this, he continued his association with the University of Kansas as a research associate from 1968 to 1969.

In 1970, Dr. Israili joined Emory University as an assistant professor of medicine and chemistry, marking the beginning of a dedicated tenure that spanned five decades. Over the years, he ascended to the position of associate professor of medicine, leaving an indelible impact on the academic and medical community.

Beyond his academic contributions, Dr. Israili served as a research associate at the Alza Corporation from 1969, contributing his expertise as a senior research chemist. His multifaceted career showcased his commitment to advancing knowledge in both academia and industry.

Dr. Israili was a very humble, soft-spoken and a thorough gentleman. He was among the senior most community leaders who came to Atlanta in 1970s and laid foundation of many community institutions. His legacy as a scholar, mentor, and dedicated professional will continue to inspire those who had the privilege of knowing him.



# We Thank Our Sponsors



**PREMIER  
PETROLEUM®**



## PLATINUM

Mr. Aziz Dhanani and Mrs. Dilshad Dhanani  
Premier Petroleum

## GOLD

Mr. and Mrs. Usman Gandhi

## SILVER



Bulldog Insurance

Mr. Azfar Haque

Mrs. Rumana Haque



Metro Atlanta

Wholesales

Mr. and Mrs.

Mamud Dhanani



Clipper

Petroleum



## BRONZE

Mr. and Mrs. Dr. and Mrs.

Dr. and Mrs.

Dr. and Mrs.

Mr. and Mrs.

AMS

Rahim Shah Asif Taufique

Shahid Rafique

Salman Ashfaq

Tarique Haque Distribution



## With Best Compliments From

- ❖ Dr. Farzana and Mr. Mohsin Bharmal ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Hasan Kamal ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Amer Habib
- ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Musheer Siddiqui ❖  Mrs. Sameena ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Ejaz Abbasi
- ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Waqas Khimani ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Akber Gadhia ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Anis Sherali
- ❖ Mehul Raja Amfam Insurance ❖ Mr. Abdullah Jafri ❖ Kebab Hut



# The Fight to Preserve the Urdu Script in the Digital World

Zeerak Ahmed has spent years in the U.S., working for some of the world's biggest tech companies. But one thing he has grown frustrated with is how "computing treats non-Latin languages as second class citizens." One such language is his mother tongue, Urdu, the national language and lingua franca of Pakistan, which is also widely spoken in India. Ahmed, who is from Lahore, has had many conversations with his friends and family about the difficulties of trying to use existing Urdu keyboards or read Urdu type. And he has witnessed many young people instead resorting to English or so-called Roman Urdu, using the Latin script to produce a phonetic transliteration, in the absence of a better solution.

While undertaking his Master's degree in engineering design at Harvard University, he came up with his own solution. After five years of working on the project, last year he launched the Matnsaz iOS app. The app offers users a more refined Urdu keyboard that groups letters by shape, autocorrects and even suggests subsequent words. It's a stark improvement on the standard Urdu keyboards available on mainstream devices. Despite being the 10th most widely spoken language in the world, according to reference publication Ethnologue, Urdu has fallen behind in the digital age due to multiple limitations. Many Pakistanis outside of the tech industry believe that Urdu text is incompatible with computing, says Ahmed. But he argues that's a flaw on the part of computing rather than the language. An effort is underway to change the narrative.

## The challenges of the Urdu script

"We live in a text-saturated society, so the exposure the younger generations have to typographic complexity is very high," says graphic designer and web developer Abeera Kamran. "They expect sophisticated results." What's available in Urdu often doesn't meet those expectations, because writers have resisted digitization for a long time due to the complexity of its written form. (Urdu uses the Nastaliq font, an ornate and fluid variation of written Arabic that is particularly complex because the shape of each letter relies on the following letter.) That now means there's very little digital content available in Urdu that can compete with what users are used to in Latin scripts. Roman Urdu is often used as a stand-in online. Earlier attempts at digitizing the Urdu script relied on the Naskh Arabic font, which is straighter and therefore easier to code. But some have argued that the Naskh font is inferior to Nastaliq when used to express the Urdu language in writing. As more of our lives become dependent on digital information and communication, some worry that the lack of an accessible digital version of the true written form of the language might lead to Urdu becoming irrelevant

for younger generations, who spend more time online than their elders. "There's this belief that you can't use Urdu for modern purposes, and so it makes it hard for the language to evolve and stay relevant for young people," says Ahmed.

Ahmed and Kamran are among those who are leading the push to prevent that from happening. The Matnsaz app is part of a larger initiative by the same name, which aims to build consumer and developer tools for Urdu online. Currently Ahmed's work includes Makhzan, an open source Urdu text corpus, and Naqqash, a string processing library for Arabic script.

Ahmed says he'd been toying with the idea for years before starting the effort in earnest in 2017. "In Europe most people are using computers in their native languages, but in Pakistan we don't do that," he says. "If you talk to Pakistanis outside the tech industry they believe you can't do modern computing in Urdu." Ahmed believes Urdu could easily be used in computing in the same way if it was given the same importance as Latin scripts and had tools built to support it. That idea became the basis for Matnsaz because so much progress in Urdu was being hindered simply because the basic building blocks didn't exist, he says.

Urdu is spoken by roughly 230 million people globally—largely in Pakistan and India, as well as among diaspora communities around the world. While there have been individual attempts to digitize the language, gaps need to be bridged between different efforts to have a global impact, Kamran says. She notes that the adoption of typographic printing in Urdu didn't happen until late in the 20th century, because of the complexity of the Nastaliq font and a lack of interest among Pakistani society in Naskh as an alternative. Before that, newspapers and books were handwritten and then photocopied to make multiple copies as needed.

## Cultural complexities

Pakistan has a longstanding cultural tie with Nastaliq, and Lahori Nastaliq in particular—the style in which Urdu is written—which can be complex to code with existing datasets, Kamran says. The cultural associations with the language are also important to understand and consider in the effort to digitize Urdu, she adds. "I realized we can't do any of this without a cultural reckoning of how Urdu and Nastaliq are ideologically tied to each other." Pakistan's socio-political struggles and the push to create a Muslim-Pakistani national identity, have resulted in resistance to certain changes deemed to be western- or foreign-influenced developments, Kamran says. Urdu is entwined with Pakistani identity, and is the country's official language, though a number of other

languages are spoken there. In pre-partition India, Urdu speakers used the language as a way of standing up against British colonization. Today, it remains a point of tension in India, where it is still spoken by millions of people, but is under threat. Although Urdu is not exclusively spoken by Muslims, it is closely associated with the practice of the faith in the region. “When it comes to Lahori Nastaliq, we think of both Pakistanis and Muslim identity together, and because of that we resisted change,” Kamran says.

This connection is what led Zeeshan Nasar and his father Nasrullah Mehr to start MehrType, a digital type foundry focusing on customized Urdu, Arabic, and Persian fonts. Mehr, an acclaimed calligrapher in Pakistan, works in the Lahori Nastaliq script. For him, the available ligature-based keyboards—which allow for flexibility when typing scripts like Arabic and Nastaliq by adapting to changing letter styles depending on what’s being typed—were simply not enough. Nasar terms ligature-based approaches to Urdu as a ‘jugad,’ an Urdu term for a makeshift solution. “With ligature-based fonts, if you enter a new word into the keyboard, and it doesn’t recognize it, it will break it up and ruin the word and style of the letters,” Nasar says. That’s why MehrType focused on creating character-based lightweight fonts that would work well for web embedding. Nasar says that if a file is too large, it takes too long to work when embedded into a link and can cause websites to slow down. The team is currently testing a new setting tool that will not only give their fonts better online security but will also include typography features. In the future, the company aims to preserve different Urdu calligraphy styles by turning them into typography. It also hopes to get more people involved in using Urdu digitally, by providing services to customize typography, offering short courses to learn Urdu typography, and converting existing books and texts to Mehr fonts.

Across the border in India, Sanjiv Saraf has curated the largest online library of Urdu poetry under the banner Rekhta. The online platform, named after an early name for the Urdu dialect, digitizes Urdu content to make it more accessible. The site started with work from 50 poets in 2013 and is now home to more than 5,000 writers’ work. Saraf’s goal is to bring Urdu to a wider audience, and the website presents Urdu literature and poetry in various formats. “A lot of the content we have online has also been recited so people get an idea of the diction, because pronunciation is also very important for the language,” Saraf says. While the Rekhta team, which consists of 230 employees and 100 volunteers, is scanning huge numbers of Urdu books to publish the contents online each day, they can’t truly digitize the works until they’re able to type out Urdu text and literature. The current lack of optical character recognition (OCR)—which converts typed, written or printed text into machine-encoded text—for Urdu has

limited the accessibility of scanned materials in the language. Kamran says there are multiple reasons for this.

“Firstly, text reads differently in print and online, so that creates an accessibility issue. You can’t search in images and that means that any sort of research and finding [available] resources get difficult, because you might never know they are there. Roman Urdu also has no set spellings so there’s no one way to search up Urdu material,” she says.

Kamran started her Master’s degree in typography after trying to create an Urdu website for Karachi Urban Lab, an organization focused on research, teaching and advocacy around development and urbanization in Karachi through data. She found the lack of typographical resources available to be a stumbling block. Her goal is to help contribute to the work that developers and language experts across the world are doing to digitize Urdu by reckoning with its cultural history. She says that the importance of Nastaliq cannot be understood until its links to Muslim-Pakistani identity building are equally understood. “Urdu and Nastaliq are ideologically tied to each other,” Kamran says. Because of the sensitivities around Urdu, she believes any changes to its presentation must be accepted in society before progress can be made.

“The result should be creating complex resources that users can use in documents to create detailed stylized documents in Urdu the same way we see formatting in English,” she says.

The current stage of development in Urdu digitization, with keyboards and basic fonts now available, has been a long time in the making and there is much more to be done. Nasar has been working on Urdu development for 18 years. Many of the fonts he wants to work on are still in progress simply because font development is such a costly process. But there has actually been great progress over the last decade. Developers have gone from previously relying on Inpage—a word processor and page layout software used for languages such as Arabic, Urdu and Persian—for years, to now having multiple efforts underway on data sets and design. This rapid growth in Urdu digitization efforts and resource development over the past few years offers hope that the foundation will become easier to build upon. And now, with AI language models in focus, tech giants like Google might help contribute to that momentum. The company announced in July that AI platform Google Bard now supports nine Indian languages, including Urdu. Saraf has a front-row seat to the progress and is optimistic. “I don’t think Urdu is struggling online, with the way our readership is growing. We have 24 million followers on Rekhta for Urdu content and every month it’s growing,” he says. “So the key is simply presenting the information in an easy-to-access manner.”

<https://time.com/6317817/urdu-nastaliq->

[digital/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=sfmc&utm\\_campaign=newsletter+brief+default+ac&utm\\_content=+++20231001+++body&et rid=207406744&lctg=207406744](https://time.com/6317817/urdu-nastaliq-digital/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=sfmc&utm_campaign=newsletter+brief+default+ac&utm_content=+++20231001+++body&et rid=207406744&lctg=207406744)

ہوسٹل سے دوسرے ہوسٹل تک سفر کر رہے۔ آپ کی مسافت بہت کم ہے۔ سفر کے فاصلہ کا دار و مدار مسافر کے حوصلہ پر ہوتا ہے۔ ہمت کیجئے اور کمروں کے بجائے ملکوں کے سفر پر روانہ ہو جائیے۔ نئے لڑکوں کے بجائے نئی قدروں سے تعارف حاصل کیجئے۔ جس مسافر کے سفر کا ہر لمحہ ایک نئی رسم تعارف کی طرح ہو اس کے لئے سفر ہمیشہ وسیلہ ظفر ہوتا ہے۔ بات یہاں تک پہنچی تھی کہ ایک لڑکے نے بے اختیار نعرہ لگایا، افلاطون کا بیٹا۔ ہجوم نے جواب دیا 'ہائے ہائے' دوسرا لڑکا بولا کشمیری سیب۔ باقی بولے 'دور و پیہ سیر۔ اس کے بعد ہجوم شور مچاتا گھنٹی بجاتا آگے بڑھ گیا۔

## سفر نصیب مختار مسعود

### ”اُردو ہے مرا نام میں خسرو کی پہیلی“

شاعر: محمد انعام

جالب نے سکھائی ہے مجھے غوئے بنات  
کرتے تھے فرارِ عشق تو مجھ سے تھی محبت  
ہے جون نے گھولی مرے لہجے میں طاوت

پروین رہی ہے مری بے باک پہیلی  
اُردو ہے مرا نام خسرو کی پہیلی

انعام بھی کرتے ہیں دل و جان سے کوشش  
بتی ہے کہیں بات کہیں ہوتی ہے لغزش  
لیکن ہے خدا ان کا بھی اندازِ نگارش

وہ ساتھ ہیں میرے تو نہیں ہوں میں اکیلی  
اُردو ہے مرا نام خسرو کی پہیلی

شامل ہے جگر کی بھی ذرا مجھ میں غماری  
پھر آئے فراق اور مری نظر اتاری  
پھر جوتے نے فطرت سے مری زلف سنواری

پھر صوفی تبسم نے سٹائی ہے پہیلی  
اُردو ہے مرا نام میں خسرو کی پہیلی

کی مجھ کو عطا فیض نے اک جہت عوای  
اور قافی کرتے ہی رہے مجھ کو سلائی  
ناصر نے تنہا سے مری دور کی غای

کرتے رہے قہیر منیر ایک حویلی  
اُردو ہے مرا نام میں خسرو کی پہیلی

لکھا تھا کہ اسٹیشن پر کسی کو بھیجنے کی ضرورت نہیں میں خود گھر پہنچ جاؤنگ۔ جب وہ آئے تو یکہ کے بجائے ایک تانگہ پر سوار تھے۔ دوسرا تانگہ سامان سے لدا ہوا پیچھے پیچھے آیا، سامان میں دو بڑے منقش چوہی افریقائی صندوق بھی شامل تھے۔ یہ سال اول میں داخلہ لینے آئے تھے مگر جس عمر میں لڑکے فرسٹ ایر فول کھاتے ہیں اس سے کم از کم دس برس بڑے تھے۔

مسلم یونیورسٹی کی دو روایات بڑی ہنگامہ پرور اور جوانکانا نشانہ بنے اس کے لئے بڑی کٹھن ہوتی تھیں۔ ایک نئے طلبا کی انٹروڈکشن نانٹ اور دوسری الیکشن ہارنے والے کا جنازہ۔ پہلی تقریب میں خامیوں پر اور دوسری میں ناکامیوں پر ہنسنا سکھایا جاتا۔ شب تعارف نئے اور ناواقف لڑکوں کی شامت آجاتی، جو بوکھلا جاتا وہ مارا جاتا۔ اس ہنگامہ کا مقصد یہ ہوتا کہ خود روپودوں کی تراش خراش کر کے انہیں باغ کی زینت بنالیں۔ فضل الرحمن کو سمجھایا گیا کہ تمہاری عمر کا مذاق اڑایا جائیگا۔ سینگ کٹا کر پھٹروں میں شامل ہونے کا طعنہ دیا جائے گا۔ پھر عمر اور علاقہ کی نسبت سے تمہیں پنجابی ڈگے کا خطاب ملیگا تمہاری شان میں فی البدیہہ مزاحیہ سجع کہا جائے گا، ممکن ہے رباعی یا قطعہ بھی ہو جائے۔ نہ پھبتی کا براماننانہ رنجی کا۔ تم سے فرمائش بھی کی جائے گی۔ اگر بے سرے ہو تو بار بار گانا سنانا ہوگا۔ سر کے پیچھے سے ہاتھ گھما کر ناک پکڑنی ہوگی اور اپنے خلاف تقریر کرنی ہوگی۔ بس مسکراتے رہنا اور بحث میں نہ الجھنا۔ فضل الرحمن کی شب تعارف آئی۔ دیکھنے ہم بھی گئے تھے یہ تماشا نہ ہوا۔ آدھی رات لڑکوں نے ڈھول اور دروازہ پیٹا۔ اندر سے مندی آنکھوں اور شب خوابی کے لباس میں مڑبڑا کر اٹھنے والے لڑکے کی جگہ فضل الرحمن برآمد ہوئے۔ استری کیے ہوئے کپڑے، تازہ شیو کیا ہوا دمکتا کشیری چہرہ ہاتھ میں ایک کتاب اسلام علیکم، آپ لوگوں نے آنے میں بہت دیر کی۔ میں تو کب سے آپ کی راہ دیکھ رہا تھا آپ سے کہیں زیادہ جلدی مجھے ہے۔ چاہتا ہوں کہ یہ رسم تعارف ختم ہو اور میں فوراً اپنی تعلیم کی طرف توجہ کروں۔ آپ دیکھ رہے ہونگے کہ میں تعلیم مکمل کرنے میں کتنی دیر لگا دی ہے۔ اب ذرا سا وقت بھی ضائع ہو تو گراں گزرتا ہے۔ لیجئے اس سٹول پر میں کھڑا ہو جاتا ہوں، یہ مسخروں کی ٹوپی اور گھنٹی مجھے دے دیجئے۔ میں خوشی خوشی ٹوپی پہن لیتا ہوں اور اپنے سر پر اپنے ہاتھ سے گھنٹی بجا دیتا ہوں پچھلے سال کرسمس میں طرح طرح کی رنگ برنگ ٹوپیاں دیکھی تھیں، ہر شخص کی مسخرہ ٹوپی دوسرے سے مختلف تھی۔ یہ آپ اتنے بہت سے لڑکوں کے لئے صرف ایک ٹوپی لئے پھر رہے ہیں۔ خوش مذاقی اور جدت میں کسی سے پیچھے رہ جانے کا کیا جواڑ ہے۔ اور یہ بات بھی بے جواز نظر آتی ہے کہ آپ ترکی ٹوپی کی درگت بنا کر اسے مسخروں کی ٹوپی بنا دیں۔ جب تک یہ آپ کا سہمبل ہے اس کی حفاظت اور عزت آپ پر لازم ہے۔ ہنسی مذاق کے لئے فیلٹ ہیٹ سے کام لیں۔ اس طرح انگریز کا رعب کام ہوگا اور آزادی کی تاریخ نزدیک تر آجائے گی۔ اچھا آپ شیرینی کے لئے چندہ مانگتے ہیں، دوسروں سے آٹھ آنے اور مجھے عمر میں بڑا ہونے کا جرمانہ ایک روپیہ۔ جناب میں نے طے کیا تھا کہ آپ میری جو قیمت لگائیں گے میں اس ارزاں قیمت پر فروخت ہونے سے انکار کرتے ہوئے اس سے دگنی رقم پیش کروں گا۔ یہ لیجئے دو روپیہ۔ نام رکھنا چاہتے ہیں تو بڑے شوق سے رکھیں، صرف یہ یاد رہے کہ زندہ قومیں اپنی سرحدوں کے ساتھ ساتھ اپنے مذاق کی حفاظت بھی کرتی ہیں۔ میں نے آپ کے اتنے نعرے اور شعر سنے ہیں اگر جان کی امان پاؤں تو ایک مشورہ پیش کروں۔ یہ آپ کی رسم تعارف مجھے ایک سفر کی مانند لگ رہی ہے۔ آپ ایک کمرے سے دوسرے کمرے اور ایک

ہر سال گرمیوں میں ڈاکیہ کے پھیرے بڑھ جاتے۔ وہ روز بہت سے خط ڈال جاتا اور یہ سارے خط والدین کی طرف سے اولاد کی اعلیٰ تعلیم کے سلسلہ میں مشورہ طلبی اور رہنمائی کی درخواست یا مسلم یونیورسٹی کے داخلہ کی باضابطہ درخواست کی صورت ہوا کرتے۔ والدین فکر مند ہوتے تو خط رجسٹری کر دیتے، امیر ہوتے تو تار پر تار دیتے۔ لڑکا پڑھائی میں اچھا ہوتا تو اس کا ذکر مقابلہ کے امتحان پر ختم ہوتا، اور کمزور ہوتا تو بار بار ناکام ہو جانے کی ذمہ داری امتحان کے فرقہ پرست کاندھوں پر ڈال دی جاتی۔ اس موسمی خط و کتابت کے نتیجہ میں ہر سال داخلہ کے دنوں میں چند لڑکوں کو اسٹیشن سے ہوسٹل پہنچانے اور دو چار کو چند دن گھر پر ٹھہرانے کا کام ایک معمول بن چکا تھا۔ ان دنوں چار پانچ سو میل کا سفر ایک معرکہ ہوا کرتا تھا جسے ریل گاڑی پر سوار ہو کر کئی دنوں میں بڑے جتن سے سر کرتے۔ اس معرکہ میں گھمسان کارن اس جتنشن پر پڑتا تھا جہاں ریل گاڑی بدلتی ہوتی۔ پہلی بار تنہا سفر کر نیوالے نوجوان کی خاطر جو اپنے قصبائی گھر میں سرشام مرغیوں کی طرح گن کر ڈربے میں بند کر دیا جاتا تھا فکر مند والدین جتنشن پر رہنے والے کسی نہ کسی فرد کو ڈھونڈ نکالتے اور بالواسطہ تعلقات کو کھینچ تان کر قریبی بنا لیتے اور ان کا واسطہ دے کر خواہاں ہوتے کہ برخوردار کو صحیح گاڑی پر سوار کرا دیں۔ برخوردار ہمیشہ بخیریت علیگڑھ پہنچ جاتا جہاں اس پارسل کو ہم وصول کر لیتے۔ اس سالانہ ڈرامی کی ہمیں پوری مشق تھی۔ استقبال کرنے والا برقت اسٹیشن پہنچتا، گاڑی ہمیشہ وقت پر آیا کرتی۔ تیسرے درجہ سے ایک نوجوان مسافر طے شدہ نشانی کے طور پر دائیں ہاتھ میں سرخ رومال لئے یا بائیں ہاتھ میں ناشتہ دان لئے نیچے اترتا۔ اس کے سامان میں ایک بڑا ٹرنک اور ایک پھولا ہوا بستر ہوتا جس میں ٹرنک سے بچ رہنے والے جوتے کپڑے بھی لپٹے ہوتے۔ مسافر کو اس کے سامان سمیت یکہ پر سوار کرا کے گھر لے آتے۔ وہ تھکن اور شرم کے دور ہونے کے بعد پہلا تبصرہ یکہ پر کیا کرتا۔ کیا بے تکی اور خطرناک سواری ہے، نہ چڑھنے کے لئے پاندان نہ بیٹھنے کے لئے کرسی۔ آدمی کو سامان کی طرح لاد دیتے ہیں اور سامان کو آدمی پر لاد دیتے ہیں۔ سواری چلتی ہے تو وہ جھٹکے کھانے پڑتے ہیں کہ عمر بھر یاد رہیں۔ ہر ایک نو وارد نوجوان اس تجربہ کو بیان کرنے کے بعد عہد کرتا کہ علیگڑھ کے پورے قیام کے دوران اگر وہ کبھی یکہ پر بیٹھا دیکھا گیا تو جو چور کی سزا وہ اس کی سزا۔ چند دن مردانہ صحن میں ان مہمانوں کی چارپائیاں لگتیں، فرش پر دسترخوان بچھتا، قاب سے ڈھکے برتنوں میں کھانا چنا جاتا۔ فارم کی تصدیق، فیس داخلہ کی رسید، ہوسٹل کی عرضی وغیرہ کے مراحل سے گذر کر وہ نوجوان ایک دن ہمارے گھر سے ہوسٹل کے کمرے میں منتقل ہو جاتا۔ پھر باوجود نیک ارادوں کے وہ صرف چھوٹی بڑی عید پر نظر آتا۔ چار چھ عیدیں گزرتیں تو وہ تعلیم مکمل کر کے خدا حافظ کہنے آ جاتا۔ اس روز وہ جس مہارت سے یکہ پر سواری کرتا اس سے پتہ چلتا کہ اس کا یونیورسٹی میں قیام کتنے برس کا اور کتنا مفید تھا۔ خدا حافظ کہنے کے بعد کئی برس گذر جاتے کہ اچانک ایک خط موصول ہوتا جس میں قبلہ و کعبہ جناب پروفیسر صاحب مدظلہ کی خیریت کا طالب ہونے کے بعد درج ہوتا کہ چھوٹے بھائی یا بڑے لڑکے کو بھیج رہا ہوں، یہ داخلہ کے سلسلہ میں اسی شفقت کا مستحق ہے جو آپ نے میرے ساتھ روا رکھی تھی۔ اس معمول میں ایک برس ایسا آیا کہ ہمارے یہاں تین لڑکوں کی سواری اتری۔ امرتسر سے شیخ سرشار، سری نگر سے پنڈت رینہ اور کسی نامعلوم مقام سے فضل الرحمان۔ آخر الذکر نے داخلہ کی خط و کتابت خود کی تھی، والدین کا صرف حوالہ دیا تھا۔ استقبال کی فرمائش کے بجائے

## زادِ سفر

آزادی سے پہلے مسلم ہند کے نشیب میں ایک دریا بہتا تھا جسے مسلم یونیورسٹی کہتے تھے۔ جو نہی مانسون ختم ہوتی داخلہ کا موسم شروع ہو جاتا اور اس دریا میں طغیانی آ جاتی۔ ہر طرف سے برساتی ندی نالے آ کر اس میں گرنے لگتے۔ کچھ گہرے اکثر پایاب کچھ سرکش اکثر نرم رو۔ آس پاس کی بات تو سمجھ میں آتی ہے مگر بعض دور دراز بلکہ سمندر پار سے بھی بہہ کر آ جاتے۔ چند ایسی مٹی سے اٹی راہوں سے ہو کر آتے کہ پانی نرا گدلا ہوتا اور چند اتنے شفاف کہ نظر پانی میں ڈوب جائے۔ دریا انہی پانیوں سے مل کر بنتا اور اسی ذخیرہ سے اٹھ کر لہریں ہستے کھیلتے ایک دوسرے کو کہنی مار کر اس کی سطح پر جگہ لینے کی کوشش کرتی رہتیں۔

ایک روز انقرہ میں زیر علی لہروں کو گننے لگے۔ چھا جانے والے مقرر اور انہیں پچھاڑ دینے والے فقرہ باز۔ الکشن کے امیدوار اور ورکر۔ ایکٹیویٹی کے زخم خوردہ اور ہنگامہ پرور۔ رائڈنگ اسکول کے شہسوار اور ہوا کے گھوڑے پر سوار پیادے۔ سان پر جملے تیز کرنے والے خوش گپ اور ان کا تختہ مشق بننے والے بور بلکہ مہابور اور بلند ربور۔ باقاعدگی سے ہر سال اول آنے والے کرم کتابی اور اسی باقاعدگی سے سال بہ سال امتحان سے دستبردار ہونے والے سینئر جن پر سیناریٹی کی گرتہ بہ تہ چڑھتی چلی جاتی۔ کچھ نام اُن گن بھرے لڑکوں کے جو صلاحیت رکھتے تھے اور کچھ نام ان گمان بھرے لڑکوں کے جو شخصیت جتاتے تھے۔ الغرض کتنے ہی نام انہوں نے دہرائے ہوئے مگر وہ چمک جو ان کی توقع کے مطابق ان ناموں کو سن کر ایک ہم عصر علیگ کی آنکھوں میں پیدا ہونی چاہیے انہیں نظر نہ آئی۔ ان کا خیال تھا کہ ہر نام پر بارود کا فنیلہ آگ پکڑ لے گا اور وہ بھک سے اڑ جائے گی۔ مگر یہ سارے نام رنجک چاٹ گئے اور کوئی دھماکہ نہ ہوا۔ ظاہر ہے کہ انہیں رنج پہنچا اور وہ شاکی ہوئے۔ ان کی خواہش تو یہ تھی کہ میں ہر ایک پر مضمون لکھوں۔ میں نے اپنی صفائی پیش کی اور سمجھایا کہ یادوں کی لذت میں برابر کا شریک ہوں مگر ان میں سے کسی شخص کا مجھ پر کوئی قرض واجب الادا نہیں۔ یوں بھی علی گڑھ اپنے نامور طلبا کا قرضہ مع سود بار بار اتار چکا ہے۔ نہ جانے اس ادارہ کے بے نام مگر باکمال طلبا کا ادھار کون چکائے گا۔ لہروں کو چھوڑ کہ ان کی اٹکھیلیاں تو سب کو دکھائی دیتی ہیں۔ آؤ دریا کی سطح سے بہت نیچے تہ سے لگی ہوئی موجوں کا ذکر کریں۔ مجھے تو اس لمحہ وہ موج یاد آ رہی ہے جو میرے طویل قیام میں ذرا سی دیر کے لئے، بس ایک تعلیمی سال کے لئے، اٹھی تھی اور میں آج بھی اس کے بہاؤ کے ساتھ بہتا جا رہا ہوں۔ یہ آج مجھے انقرہ لائی ہے، کل قونیہ لے جائے گی۔ اور پرسوں خلیج مرمرہ کے کنارے۔ اس موج کو یاد کرتا ہوں تو آنکھوں کے ساتھ زندگی کا پورا ایک رخ روشن ہو جاتا ہے۔



5.0 ★★★★★

1,700+ reviews

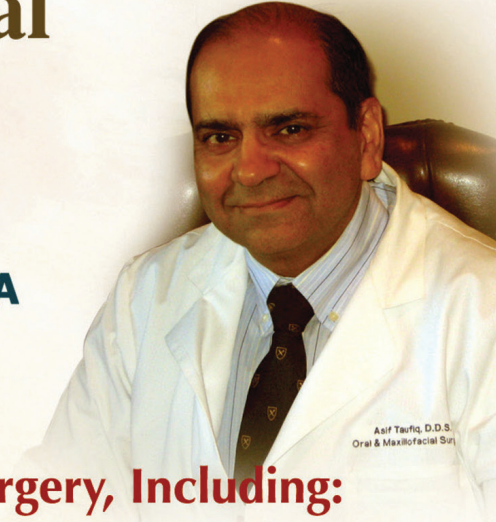
- **COVID-19 RT-PCR Test**  
Quick Results in 1, 2, 3hr
- **Molecular Genetic Testing**
  - Inherited Cancer Panel
  - Cardiology Panels
  - Alzheimer and Dementia Panel
  - Hypercholesterolemia Panel
  - Pharmacogenomics Panel
  - Whole Clinical Exome
- **Paternity/Relationship Testing**
- **Gender Reveal Testing**
- **Ancestry/Family Tree**

[www.mygenomics.com](http://www.mygenomics.com)

11535 Park Woods Circle, Alpharetta, GA 30005  
(855) 647 4363 [info@mygenomics.com](mailto:info@mygenomics.com)

# Gwinnett Center for Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

**Asif Taufiq, D.D.S., M.B.A**



**A Full Range of Oral Surgery, Including:**

---

DENTAL EXTRACTIONS  
DENTAL IMPLANTS  
COSMETIC SURGERY  
RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY  
TMJ TREATMENT  
ORAL DIAGNOSIS  
INFECTIONS OF HEAD & NECK  
TRAUMA TO THE FACE

---

15 Collins Industrial Way, B Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
Tel: (770) 962-0515 Fax: (770) 962-1244

369 Braselton Hwy., Suite 101 Dacula, GA 30019  
Tel: (770) 831-6602 Fax: (770) 831-6608

[www.centerforomsga.com](http://www.centerforomsga.com)