MEMS Dorothy Ford Wiley Dissertation workshop

Note to the reader:

This is a compilation of material I have drafted for my dissertation. The first section is an excerpt (~15 pages) from Chapter One, "An Overview of the Persian Science of the Breath." The goal for this excerpt is to familiarize the reader with the key terms and concepts that I use through the remaining text. The second section is the majority of Chapter Three, **"**A Case Study in Miz al-Nafas and the Delhi Persian Collection at the British Library." Thank you for taking the time to read my work, I welcome any and all questions and suggestions for improvements/clarifications/areas to expand/areas to contract.

Regards,

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Chapter 1: An Overview of the Persian "science of the breath"

"In this affair, unusual things are discovered, which are strange."

- *Kāmarū Pančāsikā abridgment* (Browne recension) [1]

"This is the practice [*'aml*] of the jogis [*jogian*]. It is not the activity [*f'il*] of the people of Muhammad [*ummat-i muhammadi*], but it is correct [*darust*]."

- *Kāmarū Pančāšikā abridgement* (Karachi recension)[2]

This chapter is an introduction to the various subjects encompassed by "the science of the breath" (Persian: *'ilm-i dam*). This includes abstract cosmological references to different types of breaths (i.e. solar, lunar, earthy, airy, watery, firey, ether, and so forth), as well as very tangible embodied experiences (i.e. going to war, having sex, currying favor with one's ruler, purchasing livestock, getting dressed in the morning, etc). The crux of the matter is understanding the ways in which the gross and subtle, or macro- and microcosms, are inter-related, and then analyzing what that meant for those looking to preserve, practice, and ultimately promulgate this knowledge. We will begin by discussing what the key terms in this corpus are, and how have scholars engaged with those terms differently depending on genre, time period, geography, and other contextual layers? This chapter then proceeds to an overview of the Persian manuscripts on *'ilm-i dam* reviewed for this project. As noted in the introduction, there is a longstanding Sanskrit and Hindi corpus on using the breath for divination purposes, known as *svarodaya* or *śiva-svarodaya*, the latter name indicating that many of the Sanskrit texts come in the form of a discourse between Śiva and Parvati. While *svarodaya* and *'ilm-i dam* may indeed have important linkages, there are also a great deal of differences. The ambiguity of the differences and/or

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[1] *Kāmarū Pančāsikā abridgment* (Browne recension). Cambridge, Cambridge University V.21, folio 61b.
[2] *Kāmarū Pančāsikā abridgment* (Karachi recension), Karachi, N.M.1957.1060/18, f. 2b.

overlap between these two is something I highlight as part of my broader argument about the extent to which Persian-speaking Muslim communities within and outside of South Asia integrated non-Muslim Indian knowledge and used it for their own purposes. Accordingly, I treat the Persian corpus as its own entity with occasional references to appropriate segments of the Sanskrit corpus, both in cases of agreement and lack thereof.

The present chapter provides key pieces of information about the manuscripts, documenting what is known and unknown about each of them. For example, in some cases we have a clearly written colophon in which the author or copyist identifies themselves, while in many other cases we do not. I argue here that these texts are all part of the same corpus; therefore, while they have many attributes in common, they also diverge in fascinating and important ways. I analyze these differences in order to expand our knowledge of this corpus.

As stated in the introduction, this project approaches the science of the breath (Persian: *'ilm-i dam*) as a nexus of the twin regimes of power and knowledge. As noted in the Introduction, many scholars have worked on the idea that knowledge production in and of itself is never an apolitical act, that it is *always* connected both to those who wield power, and those upon whom said power is deployed. Pestre's work is a good example, for while it is admittedly limited in scope to Europe over the past five hundred years, his work opens up some vexing questions. What would it look like if scholars today were to talk about the "knowledge economy" outside of Europe during the same time period, or earlier time periods altogether? The *'ilm-i dam* corpus stands as evidence of how knowledge moved across linguistic, religious, and—to a lesser extent— "national" boundaries.[3] That said, the precise nature and articulation of said regimes of

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[3] While the concept of the "nation-state" is a profoundly modern construction, I would argue that ruling elites such as the Mughal, Ottoman, and Safavid dynasties understood themselves as distinct from one another, albeit perhaps with a less rigid sense of territorialism.

power and knowledge remain to be seen. At its heart, *'ilm-i dam* is about gaining power through observing the correlation between the macrocosm and the microcosm. Alongside the usual iterations of this issue, i.e. who controls whom, when and why does this control take place, and what are its lasting ramifications, I make the case that this is ultimately about individuals seeking control or agency in their life. Finding this within a chaotic world has an appeal that cuts across the types of categories scholars usually employ in humanistic studies generally, let alone South Asian religious practices in particular. In keeping with Eaton[4] and Gaborieu,[5] I argue that the texts under discussion in this chapter should be thought of more in terms of their relationship to power as pertaining to both personal and collective agency than whether or not they fit cleanly into categories such as "Hindu" or "Muslim." Culturally embedded efficacy outweighs any concern for doctrinally rooted sectarianism. As noted in the epigraph above, one author wrote in the margins of one of the manuscripts that, "this is the practice [*'amal*] of the jogis [*jogiān*]. It is not the activity [*f'il*] of the people of Muhammad [*ummat-i muhammadī*], but it is correct [*darūst*]."[6] I will return to the full implications of this statement with regard to the religious identities of the practitioners of the "science of the breath" later in this study, but for the time being I want to pause and note that this particular writer chooses not to use any of a variety of terms that can be translated as ways or types of *knowing*; terms whose importance I will unpack below in some detail. Instead of focusing on *knowledge*, and the different ways to attain it, our

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[4] See Richard Eaton, "Conversion to Islam in India," in Richard Martin (ed), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001 [1985], pp 106-123. Eaton presents four theories for Indian conversion to Islam, discounting each in favor of his theory that "accretion and reform" takes place gradually over time. For a full-length treatment of this subject specific to Bengal, see his *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. (Eaton 1993)

[5] See Marc Gaborieau, "L'Ésotérisme Muslman dans le Sous-Continent Indo-Pakistanais: Un Point de Vue Ethnologique," in *Bulletin d'etudes orientales*. Vol. 44, "Sciences Occultes et Islam" (1992), pp. 191-209, especially 203.

[6] *"īn 'aml-i jūgiyān ast f'il-i ummat muhammadī nīst līkan darūst ast."* *Kāmarū Pančāsikā abridgment*, Karachi, N.M.1957.1060/18, ff. 2a.

author chooses to contrast two different terms for ways or types of *doing*. His emphasis is *practice* or *action*, and the efficacious nature thereof. In other words, if it works, you do it, no matter the source.

This begs the question, what do I really mean when invoking the phrase *'ilm-i dam*? In this section I answer that question from 'macrocosmic' or bird's eye point of view. What are the implications and connotations of the terminological choices made by scholars in discussing these texts? Moving from the somewhat abstract level of vocabulary to the particulars of tangible objects, we are fortunate to have a sizeable number of manuscripts forming this corpus. I will present the similarities and differences between them, with brief comments on aspects of this corpus that are particularly important for understanding its relevance to the broader questions regarding the broader relationship between knowledge generation and imperial power that I raise in this project.

1.1 Sub-section: *'ilm* as "science" vs *'ilm* as "knowledge – the problem of definitions and terminological legacies

When describing this project to a senior scholar of religion in South Asia, he stopped me in mid-sentence to ask, "why does it have to be 'science'"? This scholar went on to push the issue, clarifying that when we use the term "science" in English, it brings up a set of meanings and images including both general things like the concept of testing a hypothesis through repeated experimentation under a tightly controlled setting, and specific things like people in white lab coats using microscopes. The pressing implication of this anecdote for my project is that I should be cautious about invoking the term "science." As such, this is a question to which I have returned time and again throughout the process of working on this project. Alongside interrogating the nature what I—or anyone else—consider the meaning of "science," is an

inquiry into the relationship between a field of discourse presented by its practitioners as existing outside of the society that produced these very same experts. To wit, Bruno Latour points out that there is a need to "give evidence that 'science' and 'society' are both explained more adequately by an analysis of the relations among forces and that they become mutually inexplicable and opaque when made to stand apart."[7] Perhaps this is a version of the question regarding the sound made by a tree falling in a forest when no one is present. Re-phrased for our context, we might ask whether a piece of scientific knowledge, say the existence of gravity, *exists* in the same way without a mountain of specialist literature produced with the sole purpose of understanding and articulating the operation of this key feature of our universe. Whereto then, go experts, technicians, and "knowers," if we deprive them of a socially constructed field in which they are able to "know" these things? As Dominque Pestre notes, "Knowledge and science are words that can easily mislead us into inappropriate generalizations if we do not load them with precise social and material configurations."[8] Along the same lines, Deleuze and Guattari confess that they "…are no more familiar with scientif-icity than [they] are with ideology; all [they] know are assemblages. And the only assemblages are machinic assemblages of desire and collective assemblages of enunciation."[9] Understanding these *'ilm-i dam* as one of these "assemblages of desire" is a major part of this project.

Returning to the cocktail hour conversation mentioned above, I realized that I unreflexively adopted this term from the very first instance I read about the manuscript that started the entire project, which British orientalist E.G. Browne purchased while traveling in Iran in the late 19th century. He writes about acquiring a manuscript containing "a treatise on the

[7] Bruno Latour (tr. Alan Sharidan and John Law), *The Pastuerization of France*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993, pg. 7
[8] Dominique Pestre, "Regimes of Knowledge Production in Society," Minerva, vol. 41: 245-261, 2003.
[9] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pg. 22.

mystical science of managing the breath."[10] The term translated from Arabic into English as "science" is *'ilm* (pl. *'ulūm*).[11] The use of *'ilm* as a technical term regularly translated into English as science is well established from the pre-modern period through to the present. For example, one of the most well-known and highly-regarded Muslim scholars from the pre-modern period, Abū Hamīd al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 CE) titled his famous treatise *iḥya' 'ulūm al-dīn*, "the revivification of the religious sciences." Subjects currently included as esoteric or occult in nature, such as letterism and astronomy, are titled *'ilm al-ḥurrūf* (literally, "the science of letters"), and *'ilm al-nujūm* (literally, "the science of the stars"), respectively. The use of *'ilm* is consistent through to Arabic language school curricula today, where *'ilm* functions in a comparable way to the Latin derived suffix *-ology*, thus biology is *'ilm al-ḥayāt* (science of life), psychology is *'ilm al-nafs,*[12](science of the soul/self, which is very close to the Greek roots, with *psyche* referring to the soul, and *logia* referring to order/rule of a subject) and so forth. Indeed, one of the terminological legacies we see in the Persian texts from the "science of the breath" corpus is the use of Arabic in a manner somewhat akin to English writers using Latin terms. For example, the author of *Miz al-Nafas* uses the Arabic terms *shams* and *qamr* when referring to the solar and lunar breaths, respectively, while then using the Persian terms *aftāb* and *mehtāb* when referring to the physical sun and moon :

> If the sun rise (*ṭulū'-i aftāb*) is on the rising of the lunar breath (*dam-i qamrī*), [then] its setting will be on the rising of the solar breath (*dam-ī shamsī*). This hour

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10 Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 54.

11 I interrogate Browne's use of the term "mystical" below.

12 It is noteworthy here that in most cases the term for soul/self (*nafs*) looks exactly like the Arabic term for breath (*nafas*). They share the same consonants, and the only way of differentiating between them is that the former has a *sukuun* over the *fa'*, while in the latter we see a *fat-ha* over the same consonant. As I will describe below, this has lead to mistakes in the way these texts have been catalogued over the years. Of course, some of the authors of these texts might be tempted to paraphrase the famous prophetic saying, "*man 'arrafa nafsahu fa-qad 'arrafa rabbahu*" and make the argument that one who knows their *breath*, in fact knows the most essential secrets to the universe, but that is a line of inquiry for another day.

is better. If the sun rise (*ṭulū'-i aftāb*) is on the rising of the solar breath [then] its setting is on the rising of the lunar breath, it is better yet still.[13]

Thus, there is a similarity in the linguistic registers employed by authors writing in Persian for using Arabic terms on the one hand, and then authors contemporary to the present day writing in English and using Latin terms.

As this project demonstrates repeatedly, translation itself is a tricky enterprise, and it is always worth pausing to consider the implications of our choices. The term "science" has a particular genealogy in English that goes beyond the simplification of the Latin *scientia*. Similarly, the Arabic term *'ilm* is glossed as science, but has a root meaning of a particular type of knowing. There is a helpful contrast here between *'ilm* and *ma'rifa*,[14] in which the latter is understood as an experiential knowledge while the former is more cerebral or intellectual. Thus, *ma'rifat* is often glossed in translations of Sufi texts as *gnosis*, which itself imports particular cultural valences. These includes, but is not limited to, the notion that when English-speakers use Latin terms, the subtext is that both the person speaking and the term about which they speak is more important. With this in mind, I had to pose the question: why retain the expression "science of the breath," when perhaps the phrase "knowledge of the breath" would do just as well? This confusion – and the recognition that there is a great deal at stake when it comes to the precise terms that we use to describe these practices pertaining to the breath - led me to questions regarding the way scholars studying Islam have understood some of these terms when used, for

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[13] *Miz-i Nafas*. London: British Library Delhi Persian 796d. Folio 59a.
14 The Arabic feminine singular ending *taa-marbuta* is often vocalized and written as a straightforward *taa* in Persian, thus the Arabic term *ma'rifa* (معرفة) is spelled as *ma'rifat* (معرفت) in Persian.

example in Arabic and Persian, and what types of translation choices they have made to interpret those same terms for English-speaking audiences.

Standard academic sources such as the Encyclopedia of Islam (EI) comment on the early distinction between *'ilm* and *ma'rifa*, noting that the former is used to describe "knowledge acquired through reflexion, or experience, which presupposes a former ignorance," while the latter refers to "a knowledge which may be described as spontaneous; in other words, *ma'rifa* means secular knowledge and *'ilm* means the knowledge of God, hence of anything which concerns religion." [15] However, the EI editors quickly admit that "these distinctions are quite artificial and it is doubtful even whether a semantic study of the two terms based on an extensive collection of examples would throw any light on this problem, *so personal is the way in which the different writers use them and so varied according to their various disciplines*."[16] Indeed, one of the key issues this projects explores is the way that particular terms, such as *'ilm*, mean different things to different people depending on the particular context in which authors deploy them. Beyond emphasizing the porosity of these boundaries between these two terms, there is also disagreement on the basic valence found in the EI entry. For example, in his work on embodiment in Sufism, Scott Kugel notes that Sufis' understanding of divine revelation is one in which "it is intuitive paradigmatic knowledge that is given through reflection (*ma'rifa*) rather than rational practical knowledge that is learned through observation (*'ilm*)."[17] Both refer to types of knowledge, but the disagreement about which has a connection to realms labeled as religious, spiritual, secular, etc. Regardless of the discourse on the permutations of *ma'rifa* and

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[15] Ed., " Ilm", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 21 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3537.
[16] Ibid (emphasis added).
[17] Scott A. Kugle. *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam*. Chapel Hill, US: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. Pg. 33.

‘ilm, the fact is that of the texts reviewed for this dissertation, only one refers to "knowledge/experience/*gnosis* of the breath" (Pr. *ma'rifat-i dam*). This is in the description of this material on Ayatollah Hasan Zadeh Hasan Āmulī.[18] In every other case, where we even find a reference, it is to *‘ilm-i dam*.

How then, are we to understand the meaning *‘ilm* in this *‘ilm-i dam* corpus? I argue that while the term is used more in the practical, observational side of the spectrum, there are definitely ways to read it as more on the insightful, reflective side as well. Reading through the various texts in the corpus, one sees that the hypothetical reader or user of these techniques is advised to observe one's breath in order to know from which side its flows. Usually this is labeled as "sun-breath" (*dam-i shams*) or "moon-breath" *(dam-i qamr)*. Typically, the sun-breath is associated with the right side (e.g. nostril), while the moon-breath is associated with the left side. Through observing and counting the approximate number of breaths that one has in a twenty-four hour period (lit. "a night and a day," *shabānrūz*), the practitioner gains knowledge that is simultaneously observational and insightful. Without spending the requisite time observing the breath, there is no way to gain the insight. The *insight* allowing one to predict success or failure of going to war, entering into a marriage contract, or the health of a child is possible only through developing the skill of *observing* the breath in the first place.

Speculating as to the subjective experience of practicing these techniques is very difficult, and this is definitely *not* an ethnographic project, but thinking through these issues from the beginning is useful for framing the discussion that follows. Scholars approaching *‘ilm-i dam* must understand that the foundational term itself is polyvalent, which requires pausing frequently

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[18] Hassan Zadeh Amali, Hassan. "Ma'rifat-i ‘ilm-i dam" ("Esoteric Knowledge of the Science of the Breath"). "Precious Secret", pages 14-15. http://ansarolmahdiirdemousa.mihanblog.com/post/432.

during the study to consider the precise implications of a specific term at a given moment, and subsequently reflecting on the implications of attempting to measure a moving target. The act of measuring one aspect naturally impacts the other. Peter Gottshalk invokes a similar set of issues pertaining to the drawing of maps in South Asia, especially contrasting the approaches taken by the Mughals and the British during their respective periods of control.[19]

In addition to discussing the pairing of *'ilm* and *ma'rifa*, the author of one of the above epigraphs invokes a distinction between two types of action: *fi'l* and *'amal*. The EI entry on *fi'l* describes the difference between the two terms as such: "if *'amal* designates the realms of 'doing' and 'acting' (whence 'work', human acts, and moral action), and thus has at least in its last meaning an ethical connotation, *fi'l* refers above all to noetic and ontological values: the fact of actuating, of passing (or causing to pass) to the performance of an act."[20] Similarly, the EI entry on *'amal* focuses on the term's valence within Muslim philosophical writings, as well as legal and economic contexts right through to the modern period (with an emphasis on Morocco).

Pertaining specifically to mysticism as a field of study, the EI takes up the connections between *'ilm* and *ma'rifa* under the entries for the latter term as well as that of *taṣawwuf* (Sufism). After some treatment of the term within lexicons such as al-Taḥanawi's *Dictionary of technical terms*, the entry on *ma'rifa* spends a great deal of space on the term's general valence within Sufi circles, as well as the term's meaning for Andalusian scholar Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240 CE). It then concludes with a judgment on the error of translating *ma'rifa* as the Greek term *gnōsis* on the grounds that the latter term is not monolithic in nature, thereby raising the question

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[19] Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science, and Empire*, London: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 57-65.
[20] Gardet, L., "Fi l", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 21 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0221. Note that there are multiple entries on *fi'l*, the present citation refers to the entry focused on the term as used in Muslim philosophical writings, while the other treats the term as used by grammarians.

of precisely which type of *gnōsis* one means when selecting this as a translation of *ma'rifa*.[21] Citing the Greek term for Christian theological speculation, *hē gnōsis tēs alētheias*, "the knowledge of truth," Rozenthal notes that "[t]here can be no objection to the use of *'ilm* here to translate Greek *gnōsis*. The differentiation in Arabic involving a distinct preference for employing the root *'-r-f* for translating *gignōsko* and its derivatives is traceable only in much later times."[22] This is all intended to demonstrate that when it comes to the use of *'ilm* vs *ma'rifa*, one must pause and reflect upon who precisely is doing or performing the "knowing" described in a given text, what exactly are they "knowing" about, and what (if any) contextual clues exist to guide in discerning the parameters of said "knowing."

The entry on *taṣawwuf* – at 31,000 words, exponentially larger than the entries on *'ilm* and *mar'ifa* combined – breaks down into the following categories: "early development in the Arabic and Persian lands," "Ibn al-'Arabī and after in the Arabic and Persian lands and beyond," "Egypt in the 19th and 20th centuries," "in Persia from 1800 onwards," "among the Turks," "in Muslim India," "in Chinese Islam," "in Africa south of the Maghrib during the 19th and 20th centuries."[23] One is struck by the claim made in the first line of this entry that the most basic definition of *taṣawwuf* is "the phenomenon of mysticism within Islam."[24] The entry attempts at geographical comprehensiveness, but of course leaves out any mention of Muslim communities in Europe or North America, a failing that will hopefully be addressed in future editions. In conjunction with the fact that there is nothing within the voluminous entry pertaining to anything

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[21] Arnaldez, R., "Ma rifa", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 21 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0686.

[22] Rozenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, 24.

[23] Massington, L. , Radtke, B., Chittick, W.C., Jong, F. de., Lewisohn, L., Zarcone, Th., Ernst, C, Aubin, Françoise and J.O. Hunwick, "Taṣawwuf", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 21 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1188.

[24] Ibid.

that might remotely be classified as divination, magic, sorcery, etc., implies that there are clear boundaries between Sufism and *'ilm-i dam*.

One goal for this dissertation is to contribute to our understanding the precise reasons for this constructed divide, and the nature of the holes within those boundaries. The English term "science" carries with it a wealth of connotations, each with specific historical genealogies embedded in European discourse regarding the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment. There is a huge amount of scholarship on the investment of this term with specific meanings. Of particular interest for this dissertation is the interplay between science and religion and the differentiation between these terms – both together and separately – and magic and superstition. An open question then is this: what is the textual evidence supporting the employment of the phrase "science of the breath" to describe this rather large collection of manuscripts? There is evidence supporting keeping the term *'ilm-i dam:* Sayyid Burhan al-Din al-Bukhari, the writer of *Maiz-i Nafas*, states that he came to learn of a text "in the Hindavi language on *the science of the breath*" (*'ilm-i dam*), which he then translated into Persian at the request of a spiritual teacher, Shaykh Jalal al-Din of Bengal.[25] The writer of *risālah dar dam zadan* ("Treatise on Breathing") does not use the exact phrase *'ilm-i dam*, but does use the term *'ilm* no less than six times, including one occasion when he says "those that have knowledge (*'ilm*) of the breath say..." (*aknūn keh 'ilm dar dam-rā biguīm…*).[26] In this particular case, in English it does not quite make sense to say "science of the breath" because of the grammatical construction in Persian, with the term *dam* carrying the direct object marker *-rā*. One could translate the phrase to "those possessing the science of the breath," and certainly translators take more liberty than this all the

25 *Maiz-i Nafas*. London: British Library Delhi Persian 796d. Folio 57b.
26 *Risala dar dam zadan*. London, British Library Delhi Persian 824.

time, particular in literary or poetic contexts, but there remains something important about the word-for-word meaning of these terms and phrases. As such, I have opted to embrace a more literal translation style throughout this project, noting when and where other translators adopt a more figurative style.

I have adopted the term "science of the breath" from the above mentioned Sayyid Burhan al-Din al-Bukhari, as well as from a 9th/14th century Persian encyclopedia writer, Āmulī, among others. Amongst more recent interpreters of this material, British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne's description of the manuscript that inspired this dissertation is not all that dissimilar. His account, briefly summarized below and analyzed in great detail in the following chapter, includes a reference to purchasing a manuscript including a short text on the "Sufi science of managing the breath." We can see the act and or process of "knowing" something or someone as one of managing, or even controlling that same something or someone. Fittingly, the expression *'ilm-i dam* does not appear in the manuscript he effectively labels with that name. In fact, the term *'ilm* does not appear until near the end of that text, and even then, it is in sentence regarding how one could gain knowledge (*'ilm*) regarding the type of profession a given person might take up in adulthood. This begs the question: whence this term? As I will discuss in detail later on in this project, it is possible that Browne here is connecting the manuscript to Sufi texts on *ḥabs-i dam*, usually translated as "holding" or "controlling" the breath. For example, there is an illustrated manual in Urdu entitled *Risālah-yi Ashghāl* ("Treatise on Practices") on this subject whose author is affiliated with the Qadiri Sufi order, and which dates to 1260 AH/1844 CE.[27] In addition to detailed sections on the powers that come with reciting the *shahada* and the spiritual advancement available to those who go on retreat (*khalvat*) as well as proceeding along a series

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27 *Risalāh-yi Asghāl*. London, British Library OR 13298.

of *maqāmāt* (stations along the spiritual path), the author describes the techniques in this text as *ḥabs-i dam*, and makes specific references to the knowledge of the yogis.

This initial section in this chapter has focused on the terminological implication for the words used to *describe* these texts. Sometimes the person describing them is the author, and sometimes it is a scholar analyzing these texts many years after the fact. For someone writing about "the science of the breath" today, there is a constant game of interpreting the different layers of meaning so as to understand as clearly as possible what the original authors mean by the terms they used, as well as the reasons why later interpreters like Browne mean by their descriptive choices. The consequences of these choices are a subject to which I return repeatedly throughout this entire project, so at this point I will transition to describing in more detail the types of subjects we see discussed in the various manuscripts forming the *'ilm-i dam* corpus. This include listing out the manuscripts reviewed for this project.

Before proceeding to the principle contents of the *'ilm-i dam* corpus, a brief digression on translation is warranted. I return to the issue of translation repeatedly throughout this project. At this juncture, I would like to raise the challenge of defining a successful rendering of words and their polyvalent meanings from one language to another. Of particular interest is when scholars develop a set of expectations about the tools that premodern translators used to navigate at times treacherous waters in their attempts to disseminate knowledge across cultural divides. In her treatment on one of the texts that features within the *'ilm-i dam* corpus discussed in this chapter, Sakaki states that

> A translation may manifest cultural differences based on the translator's background knowledge and intention. However, it should be an authentic and well-informed representation of the source text. On the other hand, readers may understand the translated text as a part of their own culture pervaded with

concepts familiar to them. Islamication, if it may be so called, may have occurred in most works translated into Islamic languages. *The Muslim translators always kept in mind that the translation should not be treated as heretic. They often included references to Qur'anic passages, pious phrases and the Hadiths, the terminology relevant to the literary competence of the readers.* We may find many examples of this kind in the translations of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the fifty Upaniṣads, the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and the *Mahābhārata*."[28]

Sakaki's comments here merit additional remarks. While I agree with the general statements on how translations bridge cultural and linguistic differences, I would hesitate before concluding that Muslim authors are *always* looking for a textual reference to the Qur'an or hadith in order to authorize their work. Would we apply the same standards to writers with a different religious background? Does the lack of Qur'anic citations in some writings by philosophers such as al-Farabi or al-Kindi make them *less Muslim*, or is this designation more a function of the assumptions that scholars have about the external markers used to determine religious identity? Instead of the expectation that Muslim authors working on translating Indian texts from Sanskrit into Arabic and Persian somehow *need* to have Qur'anic references, what if we consider an alternative framework of legitimization, one in which the knowledge in and of itself is understood to be of value? As we will see in the various texts reviewed for this dissertation, rarely do our authors take this approach, instead at times they appear to be eschewing any such references, arguably because they do not believe that these works on the science of the breath require Qur'anic authorization. At least in the *'ilm-i dam* texts reviewed for this project, there appears to be a distinct relationship to religious difference that does not imply that authors felt the need to invoke sacred text in order to legislate or otherwise authorize their translation activities. This may be a pressing concern in other contexts, and certainly charges of heresy or blasphemy are rarely a trifling affair, but the corpus in question for this project testifies to a

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[28] Kazuyo Sakaki, "Yogico-tantric Traditions in the *Ḥawḍ al-Ḥayāt*," 137. Emphasis added.

different social, political, and religious reality. One explanation for the difference between these texts and the ones that Sakaki cites as examples is that the latter fall into the category of court-sponsored translation projects. In those situations, there would arguably be a much greater degree of scrutiny imposed on translations of Indian epic or religious texts. By contrast, the *'ilm-i dam* texts are being translated, copied, and otherwise promulgated in a different social and political context. As the entries on the list in this chapter demonstrate, very few if any of the entries survive in some type of court-sponsored translation project. The one main exception to this is the rendering of *svarodaya* material from Sanskrit into Persian for the compendium of Indian knowledge housed within the *A'īn-i abkari*, compiled by Mughal emperor Akbar's court historian, Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak in the 16th century. This exceptional case is the focus of Chapter Four.

[*Note to reader: the remainder of Chapter One presents a list of the various manuscripts reviewed for this dissertation. I am happy to send this material to anyone who is interested in reading the full chapter.*]

Chapter Three: "A Case Study in *Miz al-Nafas* and the Delhi Persian Collection at the British Library"

> "Among the many symptoms of the re-orientation of the human mind and human interests occasioned by the revolutionary movement in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century, none is more remarkable, *sui generis*, or more striking, than the sudden, and, as it seems, spontaneous growth of a realization that the Orient had spiritual, as well as material, riches to offer to the Occident: its material wealth had, indeed, for some centuries now been exploited; but of its spiritual treasures none, save a very few eccentric and anachronistic geniuses, had the remotest conception."[29]

A.J. Arberry, *The India Office Library: A Historical Sketch* (1938)

> *"This book is largely made up of Hindu customs which, in India, have become part of Muhammadanism*, but we shall endeavor to confine ourselves to a consideration of these sections which exhibit the so-called science as it exists in its relation to Islam."* [30]

Thomas Hughes, *"Dictionary of Islam"* (1885)

The previous chapters introduced the conceptual framework for studying a group of texts on the science of the breath (Persian: *'ilm-i dam*, see Chapter One), as well as providing one case study that compared two recensions of the *Kamaru Panchashika* (see Chapter Two). The present chapter moves the focus of this inquiry to a manuscript, *Miz al-Nafas* ("Distinction of the Breath") that stands as an outlier of sorts within the broader corpus outlined in Chapter One. This chapter is structured as follows: first, I present a detailed analysis of the manuscript, asking (and answering) questions about the text and what information that each passage holds for our understanding of the broader corpus. One of the overarching claims I make in this project is that these texts hang together as a coherent body of literature containing knowledge of the breath and specific details on how to use that knowledge towards specific ends (i.e. predicting the future, understanding the auspicious and inauspicious times to undertake certain actions, altering

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[29] A.J. Arberry, *The India Office Library: A Historical Sketch*, London: India Office, 1938, pg. 7.
[30] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 74. Emphasis added.

relationships between oneself and others, and predicting the moment of one's death). Yet each of these texts testifies to these practices in subtly different ways. The second part of this chapter is designed to shed light not only on the material nature of the text, thus I will switch terms and describe the manuscript instead of simply the more disembodied phrase of "the text." By emphasizing the physical form in which this text appears, I intend to argue that we cannot understand a "text" without understanding the very specific history of a given manuscript. If the words on the page have one meaning, then the history of those specific pages has another meaning. This is not intended as some sort of esoteric appeal, but actually quite the opposite. Through examining the available historical evidence, we can recreate a "chain of custody" for *Miz al-Nafas*. In so doing, I argue that there is a great deal to learn about the role that manuscripts played in the period of British imperial rule in South Asia, a period of rule from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, and specifically the role that acquiring these manuscripts played in analyzing the mutually constituative relationship between regimes of power and knowledge that is at the heart of this project. The ways in which British officials desired and insisted upon the acquisition of the Delhi Persian collection are part and parcel of a much broader reaching disposition; simply put, they sought to control and subdue India through physically controlling the physical manifestation of its intellectual heritage: its manuscripts. That such attention was paid to a collection of objects formerly in the possession of the Mughal royal family is especially important, for it speaks to the ways in which the British saw themselves as supplanting the old regime and putting themselves (once and for all, so they thought) firmly in the position of ruling over South Asia.

If academic publications and gatherings on the decolonization of knowledge take place with increasing frequency today, then this chapter should stand as testimony to a very particular

set of circumstances in which said colonization happened in the first place. My goal is not to replicate any of the previous work that has taken place in this area, but instead to add another wrinkle to the picture. I argue that there is a direct connection between the way in which British officials acquired the Delhi Persian collection, the ways that subsequent generations of officials catalogued and classified several manuscripts within that collection, and the manner in which British imperial policies advanced an agenda of divide-and-conquer on the basis of religious affiliation during the time of their rule in South Asia.

As noted above, while the contents of the texts in the *'ilm-i dam* corpus are similar, the contexts in which they appear and the way in which interpreters receive them differs greatly. This last point is perhaps even more – or at least, equally – illustrative for these texts' importance than the detailed textual analysis that maps out precise terminological similarities and variances. The point is that these texts do not exist in any kind of vacuum, but rather are deeply embedded in particular historical contexts with implications that we may label as political, religious, cultural, intellectual, or otherwise. Regardless of the category into which we place a text or the implications of the manner in which it has been classified, the central theme to which I return our attention is that of power and regimes thereof. Who benefits from classifying *Miz al-nafas* as being essentially "Hindu" or "Muslim" in character? How much can we read into the very question itself over and against the broader context of knowledge production on India by British officials during the imperial era? With brief reference to the manuscripts examined in Chapter Two, when E.G. Browne refers to one recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* as a "Sufi" text, what does that mean? And what are the implications when Austrian Orientalist Alfred von Kremer views another recension of the *Kamaru Panchashika abridgment* as a perfect example of how Hinduism and Indian teachings have corrupted "pure" "Arab" Sufism, and his

conclusions continue to resonate with certain constituencies within and outside of South Asia today? If there is a slogan for this project, it would be "categories matter."

The consequences apply regardless of whether we approach these breath-centered divination practices from the Persian or Sanskrit corpus. We can return here to commentary on these practices by Bhavsar, a contemporary translator of a *siva-svarodaya* text from Sanskrit into English. In his introduction, he describes *siva-svarodaya* as knowledge whose "special application is in the field of Yoga, tantra, Ayurveda, besides in branches of sciences like linguistics, back-magic, music, omens, archery, erotics, astrology, forecasting etc, it is relavant. *One wonders why there has been such a set back to this tradition, just before the end of the nineteenth century when it was very much in vogue.*"[31] One wonders indeed! What possible explanations could there be for this decline in relevance and use of a 'way of knowing' that promises such power? Could it be the imposition of a competing regime of knowledge that was coupled with an ever-growing and insatiable regime of power in the form of European colonialism? And note that the author here cites the nineteenth century, not the seventeenth or sixteenth, as the time of decline. This is a direct correlation to British imperial rule, to be contrasted with the Mughal dynasty. By way of highlighting this comparison, I propose that this critical for understanding the different approaches taken by these respective "regimes" of power vis-a-vis India and Indology.

Thus, there are two distinct but very closely related threads to this chapter. The first is a traditional comparative textual analysis, while the second is about the reception history of these texts. This includes an awareness of the texts as physical objects that also come to play a role in the scholarly construction of Muslim religious practice in South Asia, Persia, and beyond. Rather

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[31] Bhavsar, 44. Emphasis added.

than treat these two threads completely separately, the methodology I embrace here is decidedly

rhizomatic in nature, with multiple entry points, following the model of the warren that Deleuze

and Guattari set forth in *A Thousand Plateaus*.[32] The key characteristics of the more horizontally-

oriented rhizome (as compared to the arboreal tap root model that is hierarchical or vertical in

orientation) described by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, is best summed up as

the following: looking for multiple entry points to a discursive tradition, being open to cross-

pollination between communities and their respective forms of cultural production, and

"grabbing the blade of grass by the middle," as it were.[33] My point here is that philological

analysis, while a foundational part of so much scholarship, is empty if performed without due

attention to the manner in which the *objects* of said analysis have been positioned by human

actors, who in turn benefited from this same analysis. We as scholars fail to do our subjects much

justice if we neglect to discuss the power dynamics at play in knowledge production, particularly

in the context of European (here, British) imperial expansion and control of India.

The key text in this chapter, *Miz al-Nafas*, bears its own history specific to the

construction of Islam and Sufism as objects of study in the context of the British colonization of

India. When weighing these various perspectives on Islam, Sufism, and the relationship between

them, I will introduce Thomas Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, published in England and India in

the latter stages of the nineteenth century, as well as relevant entries once again from the

Encyclopedia of Islam. In reviewing these key reference works utilized by scholars of Islam over

the past century and beyond, we see how the regimes of knowledge are constructed to put

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[32] Deleuze and Guattari, Deleuze and Guattari (trans. Brian Massumi), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pp. 12-13.

[33] *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Joseph Kresh (New York: Schocken, 1948), p. 12, cited in Deleuze and Guattari (trans. Brian Massumi), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pg. 23, note 22.

forward particular viewpoints on terms such as religion vs. magic, and concepts such as Muslim communal self-determination vs. a "need" to be brought under the control of "civilizing" bodies and enterprises such as thought found in the British colonial venture.

3.1: Sub-section: On Dictionaries and Encyclopedias: Regimes of Knowledge in Reference Works on Indian Islam

Published in 1885 by Anglican missionary Thomas Patrick Hughes (1838-1911), the *Dictionary of Islam* is a perfect source for distilling British scholarly views on various aspects of Islam and Muslim communities. Hughes served as a missionary to Peshawar for some twenty years, from January 1865 until March 1884, when he returned to England. As one biographer notes, "Like many Englishman of the cloth, his role as missionary was part of the expansion of the British Empire, whether he, the Church of England, or the British Empire perceived it as such at the time. He was proud of the civilization that had bred him and saw the British Empire as part of a cherished and superior society."[34] In a description reminiscent of William Dalrymple's biography of various British officers in India in the 18th century,[35] Hughes apparently dressed according to local custom and eventually spoke Pashto fluently so as to more effectively communicate with the local people.[36] All this is to say that he was no "armchair anthropologist," writing a book about peoples, customs, and beliefs of which he had no real first-hand knowledge.[37] Reviews of the book at its time of publication were largely positive, noting

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[34] Elizabeth Hughes Clark, "Thomas Patrick Hughes, Missionary to British Indian: The Class Ceiling," Project Canterbury, 2007 (anglicanhistory.org), consulted on July 27th, 2017, pg. 3.
[35] William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*: *Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India*, London, Harper Collins, 2002.
[36] In addition to *The Dictionary of Islam*, Hughes authored a textbook for students to learn Pashto, *The Kalid-i-Afghani, Being Selections of Pushto Prose and Poetry for the Use of Students*. Lahore: Munshi Culab Singh and Sons, 1893.
[37] This would be in direct contrast to works such as James Mill's *The History of British India* (1817), which became highly influential among British imperial officers despite the fact that Mill never visited India.

Hughes' first-hand experience living within Muslim communities – especially in India – as evidence of his expertise. By way of criticism, one reviewer actually took issue with the extent to which Hughes "has scrupulously restrained" his missionary views, since Hughes relies at times on the previously published work of other scholars in place of writing out his own views.[38] An American review agreed on Hughes' qualifications (at the time of publication, Hughes was apparently lecturing throughout the U.S. and thus became well-known here), and noted that "[t]hough its author, as a Christian missionary as a representative of European civilization, is outspoken in his condemnation of the defects and errors of the Asiatic system, he carefully abstains from denunciation and polemical discussions. His object is simply to enlighten us, in conveniently consultable form…"[39]

Understanding Hughes' intentions for how this work would operate and the type of need it would fill becomes an easy task after consulting the work's dedication:

> The 'Dictionary of Islam' has been compiled with very considerable study and labour, in the hope that it will be useful to many; -to the Government official called to administer justice to Muslim peoples; to the Christian missionary engaged in controversy with Muslim scholars; to the student of comparative religions anxious to learn the true teachings of Islam; --to all, indeed, who care to know what are those leading principles of thought which move and guide one hundred and seventy-five millions of the great human family, forty millions of whom are under the rule of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Empress of India. - July 23rd, 1885. *Preface*, pg. *Vii*

What we see in this dedication is an outline of Hughes' intended audience. Colonial administrators need this information in order to rule fairly over Muslim peoples. Christian missionaries need it in order to debate matters of doctrine with Muslim theologians. "Students of comparative religion" must read it in order to alleviate their fears that they do not know "the true teachings of Islam." Lastly, anyone who wants to know what motivates some "forty millions" of

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[38] *The Athenaeum*, No. 3047, March 20, 1886, pp. 385-386.
[39] "A Dictionary of Islam," *The Critic: a Weekly Review of Literature and the Arts*, May 22, 1886, pg. 254.

the queen's subjects must also find these answers in this encyclopedia. But these "millions" never get the chance to speak for themselves. Instead, Hughes and his colleagues do all the representing for them. If "the East is a career,"[40] then these Brits have well and truly pursued said career for all it is worth. This encyclopedia, and in particular this quote from its preface, testify to the combination of knowledge production alongside the application of power. These two regimes do not exist separately, but instead cohere together in a shared space.

Hughes' entry on *da'wah* gives us one illustration of the operating assumptions within his project. He defines the term as being "used to express a system of incantation which is held to be lawful by orthodox Muhammadans; whilst *sihr*, 'magic,' and *kahanah*, 'fortune-telling,' are said to be unlawful, the Prophet having forbidden both."[41] Hughes does not explicitly say how he would go about discerning the line between orthodox and unorthodox Islam, but readers are left with a few clues. For example, he writes that the "science of *da'wah* has, however been very much elaborated, and in many respects its teachers seem to have departed from the original teaching of their Prophet on the subject."[42] In this depiction we see that Hughes relies upon a reification of the Prophet Muhammad as the one and only deciding factor when evaluating whether or not a given practice or tenet is legitimate. If textual evidence attests that the Prophet Muhammad did something or said a given action was acceptable, then it is licit. In this way, there are some important points of congruence between modern Salafist discourse and Orientalists writing in Hughes' period, and beyond.

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[40] This line, written by Benjamin Disraeli in *Tancred*, was perhaps most famously cited by Edward Said as an epigraph for *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1978.

[41] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 73. Interestingly, the entry on *da'wah* is cited by reviewer in *The Athenaeum* (see above) as one of the more worthwhile articles in the entire *Dictionary of Islam*.

[42] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 73.

In broader terms, Hughes breaks down the different forms of divination, *kahaneh*, noting that certain forms are "spiritual magic," while others classify as "natural magic," and yet another group fits in between these two: astrology. He states that at his time of writing, this practice is widespread amongst Muslims, and that "professors" of astrology are employed more so by Persians and Turks than by Arabs.

One of the most pressing specific examples from *The Dictionary of Islam* is found in this same entry on *da'wah*. We read that "[i]n India, the most popular work on *da'wah* is the *Jawahiru 'l-Khamsah*, by Shaikh Abu 'l-Muwayyid of Gujerat,[43] A.H. 956, in which he says the science is used for the following purposes. (1) To establish friendship or enmity between two persons. (2) To cause the cure, or the sickness and death, of a person. (3) To secure the accomplishment of one's wishes, both temporal and spiritual. (4) To obtain defeat or victory in battle."[44] As noted in the list of texts forming the *'ilm-i dam* corpus in Chapter One, this specific text was widely read. Hughes' description here fits quite closely with some of the major points of congruence unifying the corpus. Key for our understanding of how orientalist scholarship interpreted this text in particular, and by extension, the corpus as a whole, is the following sentence from the same entry: *"This book is largely made up of Hindu customs which, in India, have become part of Muhammadanism,"* but we shall endeavour to confine ourselfes to a consideration of those sections which exhibit the so-called science as it exists in its relation to Islam."[45] Here we see that the *Javahir-i Khamsa* is classified as Hindu and not Islamic on the basis of its contents, no matter that its use by Muslims was well documented. It as if Hughes and other scholars of his time could not imagine a version of Islam in which Muslims engaged in the

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[43] Hughes appears to be confused here about the text's authorship, for all other sources agree that the *Jawahir-i Khamsa* was written by Muhammad Ghaus.
[44] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 73.
[45] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 74. Emphasis added.

types of practices described in this text. And yet the evidence is that Muslims in South Asia (and other regions) very much did engage in these practices of divination. Interrogating this paradox is at the heart of this dissertation, which joins a growing scholarly production that uses textual and material evidence to poke holes in the theory that there was an impermeable boundary separating people in pre-modern and colonial-era South Asia society on the basis on religious identity.

As will be presented in detail below, Azfar Moin documents an instance in which Muhammad Ghaus' brother, Shaykh Phul, utilized the reciting of divine names to gain victory in battle. Finbarr Flood presents compelling evidence for the material and intellectual exchange that was the rule far more than the exception in the centuries before the Mughal dynasty and all of the discussion of "syncretic" policies adopted by Akbar and the *din illahi* ("divine faith"). In the modern period, Anna Bigelow presents an ethnographic study on Malkerkotla in the Indian Punjab, demonstrating how Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs "share the sacred" by all participating in rituals affiliated with a particular shrine complex.[46] Philip Wagoner studies dress customs in in the Hindu kingdom at Vijayanagara to shed light on the ways in which Hindu rulers adopted particular patterns of dress popular among Muslim rulers from surrounding areas in order to boost their own prestige.[47] Using translation theory, Tony Stewart brings to the light the problematic nature in assuming the framework of syncretism in studying religious practice in Bengal, specifically that scholars idealized the supposedly pure parent entities of Islam and

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[46] Anna Bigelow. *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

[47] Philip B. Wagoner, "Sultan among Hindu kings': dress, titles, and the Islamicization of Hindu culture at Vijayanagara." The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Nov., 1996), pp. 851-880.

Hinduism.[48] Cynthia Talbot looks at inscriptions found Andhra Pradesh from the fourteenth to seventeenth century, and identifies a wealth of evidence in the form of Sanskrit and Telegu inscriptions to counter the popular narrative that British colonial rule essentially created the sectarian discord that plays such a major role in Indian society up through today.[49] This very brief literature review highlights some of the challenges made by scholars working on religious identity in India have made in the past decades to the notion that religion served (and continues to serve) as an impenetrable boundary. Instead, the evidence suggests a state of affairs that is far more complex.

There is ample evidence that European orientalist scholarship from the 18th and 19th centuries repeatedly treated Sufism in South Asia as an amalgamation of Hinduism and Buddhism, cloaked in the robes of Islam. For example, the *Dictionary of Islam* contains a lengthy entry on Sufism, including the sub-section on "the True Character of Sufism." Jalaluddin "Rumi" is frequently set up as the apogee of Sufi teachings, especially as found in his epic poem, the *Masnavi*. Hughes uses a passage from this poem to illustrate his point that "the great object of the Sufi Mystic is to lose his own identity."[50] After citing the passage, he proceeds directly to the claim that "[t]he Sufi doctrines are undoubtedly pantheistic, and are almost identical with those of the Brahmans and Buddhists, the New-Platonists, the Beghards and Beguins."[51] These last two groups are Christian lay orders from the medieval period, the first of which was founded in Flanders in the 13th century. Through referencing these groups alongside "Brahmans and

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[48] Stewart, Tony K. "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim Hindu Encounter through Translation Theory." History of Religions 40, no.3 (2001), pp.260-287.

[49] Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-colonial India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* Vol. 37, No. 4 (Oct., 1995), pp. 692-722.
[50] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 620.
[51] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 620.

Buddhists," but without specifying a time period, Hughes is in effect arguing for a timeless

understanding of this one group of Hindus, of all Buddhists, and of course, all Sufis. This is a

classic move for orientalist discourse, in which "eastern" groups are depicted as unchanging over

time, while the notion of progress is reserved for "western" groups. Hughes goes on to state that

Sufis really only pretend to be Muslim:

> On certain tenets of the Qur'an the Sufis have erected their own system,
> professing, indeed, to reverence its authority as a divine revelation, but in reality
> substituting for it the oral voice of the teacher, or the secret dreams of the Mystic.
> Dissatisfied with the barren letter of the Qur'an, Sufiism appeals to human
> consciousness, and from our nature's felt wants, seeks to set before us nobler
> hopes than a gross Muhammadan Paradise can fulfill.[52]

Hughes does not provide a specific list of the "certain tenets" from the Qur'an that Sufis

have appropriated for their own purposes, but his specific argument against them bears some

expansion and analysis. First, he does not differentiate between all the many different schools of

Sufism. Second, When Hughes writes that Sufis replace the Qur'anic tenet with "the oral voice

of the teacher, or the secret dreams of the Mystic," he is leveraging a particular type of rationalist

discourse that claims that knowledge acquired from dreams is invalid in comparison to that

gained from reading text. For the first point, what are we to make of Hughes' disavowal of "the

oral voice of the teacher"? The Qur'anic text is full of references to the power of the spoken

word; indeed, the tradition holds that the very first verse revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by

the angel Gabriel began with the imperative "recite" (*iqra'*).[53] Of course, this verb can be

understood as either "recite" (i.e., read out loud), or simply "read." Literacy itself has become

common today in many parts of the world, but this is strictly a modern phenomenon. Hughes

may be critiquing the notion of mediation, or the emphasis that many Sufi orders place on the

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[52] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 620.
[53] Qur'an 96:1.

powerful status of teachers in disseminating knowledge. But he could just as easily be criticizing

Catholic liturgy and hierarchical ecclesiastical structure as that of a Sufi *tariqa* (order), which in

deed is part of Robert Yelle's argument in his work on the role of Protestant literalism in British

attitudes and policies towards religious groups in India (especially Hinduism) during the colonial

period.[54] Regarding his comment on the "secret dreams of the Mystic," this emphasis on reading

scripture—which is printed, fixed, *externalized*, and thus standardized for anyone to read—over

and against validating the private, unspoken, *interior*, and thus unverifiable experience of

dreams, is illustrative of the biases that scholars like Hughes brought with them in their approach

to the study of Islam (and other religious traditions. His comment on the "barren letter of the

Qur'an" is itself indicative of how he understood the Muslim sacred text, in juxtaposition with

his understanding of the Bible, with special emphasis on the New Testament.

In the first part of the cited passage, Hughes appears to be saying that Sufis are corrupting

some type of pure Islam through the aforementioned emphasis on an authority figure's oral

recitation of religious truth and teachings, as well as the potential for knowledge from unreliable

sources such as dreams to rise up and be shared with the community. Curiously, he switches

approaches in the next sentence, now presenting Sufism (and Sufis, presumably) as doing

whatever possible to bridge the gap between "the barren letter of the Qur'an" on one side and

"human consciousness" made up of "our nature's felt wants" on the other. In this reading, Sufism

represents a more effective vehicle for finding one's way to fulfillment, and is clearly and

definitively differentiated from Islam. This is part of the orientalist tack, to de-root Sufism from

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[54] Robert Yelle, *The Language of Disenchantment: Protestant Literalism and Colonial Discourse in British India*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

its Islamic context because for someone like Hughes, the one cannot possibly be an authentic part of the other.

Hughes goes on. In his critique of "the result of Muhammadan mysticism," Hughes says, "It has dug a deep gulf between those who know God and those who must wander in the darkness, *feeding upon the husks of rites and ceremonies*."[55] This last sentence illustrates the same type of hostility towards ritual actions, which again would dovetail with Yelle's argument. Influenced heavily by a Protestant literalism that took much of its inspiration from the Reformation, British officers and ministers looked at Hindu religious practices, especially the reciting of mantras, as another version of the Catholic ritualism that their ancestors had denounced years and years earlier. Part of Hughes' concern is that without monotheism, a society is doomed to chaos: "The logical result of Pantheism is the destruction of a moral law."[56] This last point is quite curious, for Hughes does not go into detail regarding his exact meaning. What is the exact connection between pantheism and morality? He does not say, leaving the reader to fill in the gaps on their own.

For a point of comparison to the vision of Islam and Muslim communities that Hughes presents, I now turn to the Encyclopedia of Islam (EI) that featured at the beginning of Chapter One. When examining the entries in the EI on subjects that potentially touch upon the practices encompassed by *ilm-i dam*, such as sorcery, magic, divination, and medicine, the main conclusion is that the lack of a stable theorization for these very practices is one of the most challenging aspects of studying *'ilm-i dam*.

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[55] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 621. Emphasis added.
[56] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 621.

Beginning with the term *sihr*, sometimes translated as sorcery or magic, we learn about how Muslim sources that pre-date Hughes by a veritable millennium or more have approached these subjects.[57] One of the most noted scholars of divination in the Middle East, Toufic Fahd, writes that "*'ilm al-siḥr* is often seen as equivalent to *'ilm al-nudjūm*. This results from the notion that the planets exert beneficial and baneful influences over the three domains of the created being." Of the early sources that Fahd cites, the key is the 11th century writer al-Madjriti, who writes that magic is divided into theoretical and practical realms.[58] Ibn Khaldun includes extensive discussion of magic and astrology in his work, and he was definitely aware of the sources cited above in Fahd's work. Here we see the connection made very clearly between one of the most well-known and widely-read Islamicate writers from the premodern period and the field of magic as a completely accepted arena of human knowledge.

Next, we turn to the EI entry on *rukya*, or the enunciation of "magical formulae for procuring an enchantment."[59] Fahd writes that *rukya* "is one of the procedures of siḥr [q.v.], used by the Prophet himself and, because of this, permitted in exceptional cases, on condition that it brings benefit to people and does not harm anyone. One may have recourse to it against poison,

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[57] Fahd, T., "Siḥr", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7023. Fahd bases this conclusion largely on readings of *Ghāyat al-ḥākim*, the 11th century text by Abū Maslama Muḥammad al-Madjrītī, who in turn was inspired by *Rasā il* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā , and by a slightly earlier text known as *Nabataean agriculture*, by Abu 'l-Ḳāsim al-Zahrāwī (d. *ca.* 400/1009). He quotes al-Madjriti on magic: "Magic essentially comprises two parts, one theoretical and the other practical. The first consists in knowledge of the positions of the immobile heavenly bodies (which is where, in fact, the forms are located), the modalities of their radiation on the planets and, finally, aspects of conjunctions of the celestial spheres at the precise moment that the successful outcome of a project is desired. Under this heading, the ancients placed everything having to do with discernment of the beneficial and of the baneful and with theurgy. As for practical magic, it consists in the knowledge of the three domains of the created being (*al-muwalladāt al-thalāth*) and of the qualities of the planets which would be disseminated there."

[58] Fahd, T., "Siḥr", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7023.

[59] Fahd, T., "Ruḳya", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6333.

bites, fever, the evil eye, etc. According to Muslim, "charms are forbidden as soon as they touch upon, in one manner or another, polytheism"." This last statement by Muslim brings us to one of the theological issues at play in assessing the licitness of practices such as *'ilm-i dam*. When the text included in the *Nafā'is al-funūn* by Āmulī mentions the goddess Kamyakh Dev, what would this Hadith compiler say as to whether or not this mention of the goddess crosses a line into *shirk* (association), e.g., polytheism? While ultimately the answer is impossible to know, nevertheless it remains an important question. As Fred Donner's work in *Among the Believers* demonstrates, when an assertion of radical monotheism rises as a key component of the early Muslim community's sense of identity, hard choices are made regarding the precise drawing of these boundaries, and those choices are by no means static over time. Specifically, Donner outlines the difficulties for scholars working in the present day in identifying the precise valence of key terms used in texts from over a millennium ago, such as "Muslim" and "believer" (*mu'min*).[60]

Fahd provides a wealth of evidence from early Muslim sources indicating that the Prophet Muhammad approved of, and engaged in practices like *ruqya*. Citing al-Tirmidhi, Fahd writes that "the Prophet thought that beneficial *ruqya* could modify the fate decreed by God and that it was in fact part of it." Along with this general approval are several examples where the Prophet Muhammad was reported to advise one of his wives to use *ruqya* help heal an ill slave, and one in which the Prophet Muhammad used *ruqya* in order to cure a sick man; he placed his right hand on him and pronounced a conjuration formula. When he was ill, he recited over himself magical formulae and spat. Ā isha used to do it for him when sorrow was particularly heavy upon him. The angel Gabriel would sometimes come to him and apply a *ruqya*."[61]

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[60] Fred Donner, *Among the Believers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 57-59 and 204.
[61] Fahd, T., "Ruḳya", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-

The image of the Prophet Muhammad as not only condoning, but participating in a type of sorcery or magic is very striking. What does it mean that 'A'isha would help him with this task "when sorrow was particularly heavy upon him"? Additionally, what comparisons can we draw between the invoking of the angel Gabriel here, and divine entities such as *Kamak Dev* or the yoginis that Muhammad Ghawth edits out of his version of the *Kāmarū Pančāšikā*? With the Prophet Muhammad serving as the exemplar who many Muslims would strive to follow, "*ruqya* from then onwards multiplied enormously, and, especially, amongst the more backward milieux of society. The intellectual classes were unanimous in formally forbidding the practise of magic, but, in the absence of a definition of the idea of *siḥr* in the Ḳur ān, as likewise in Islamic law, this prohibition was watered down by the Prophetic example." Note Fahd's disdainful attitude towards practitioners of these practices. The "backward milieu" is contrasted with the "intellectual classes," the latter who condemned its practice formally, but in the end could not negotiate their way past examples where the Prophet Muhammad at minimum tacitly approved of it. This is reminiscent of the distinction drawn during the pre-modern period by Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi, who wrote about religion as a watered-down version of philosophy. In al-Farabi's system, religion was a symbolic system necessary to communicate philosophical truth to the vulgar masses ('*awwām*) by the "elite" (*khawaṣṣ*). Between Fahd and Hughes, we see illustrations of attitudes held by scholars separated by decades as well as geographical provenance. Fahd cites the 'Ashari jurist al-Juwayni (d. 681/1283) and the aforementioned Ibn Khaldun in making his point that early Muslim writers accepted the existence of magic and sorcery, although they certainly had an array of opinions as to whether or not it was licit.[62] For Fahd, al-Ghazali's contribution was to clarify that "magic is based on a

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[62] Fahd, T., "Siḥr", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van

combined knowledge of the properties of certain terrestrial elements and of propitious astral

risings."[63] When Fahd cites al-Ghazali, it is true that he is bringing in one of the most

authoritative authors from the premodern period. Fahd then returns to Prophetic example to

justify al-Ghazali's words, thereby closing the circle so that no one can dispute his argument on

these stances taken towards magic and sorcery in Muslim theological and philosophical schools.

The goal of this section has been to present an overview of the diverse opinions on magic

and sorcery held by Muslim writers from the early Islamic period onwards, and place those

opinions alongside those of Hughes as found in *The Dictionary of Islam*. The contrast between

them is evident, in that the Muslim writers not only freely acknowledge the existence of sorcery,

but provide examples from the Prophet Muhammad's life for specific places, circumstances, and

methods where its use is approved of. At the same time, Hughes treats magic and sorcery as a

foreign object that has infected Islam—specifically, Muslim religious practice—through the

vectors of Hinduism and Buddhism. Certainly Hughes' decades of experience living along the

border areas between present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan cannot be dismissed as an

insignificant factor, but so too are the broader scholarly, religious, and imperial setting in which

he worked. For Hughes and his colleagues, "India" (broadly understood), was a key component

of the British Empire. By the late nineteenth century, this status meant that it a growing number

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Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7023.
He quotes from Juwayni and Ibn Khaldun as follows: "Al-Djuwaynī (d. 681/1283), an Ashʿarī jurist, wrote, "God has merely prohibited what is harmful and not that which is useful; if it is possible for you to be useful to your brother, then do it" (cited in Bousquet, op. cit., 301 n. 104); whilst Ibn Khaldūn wrote, "The religious law makes no distinction between sorcery, talismans and prestidigitation. It puts them all into the same class of forbidden things" (Muḳaddima , tr. Rosenthal, iii, 169)."

[63] Fahd, T., "Siḥr", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 30 June 2017 http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7023.

of missionary societies sent representatives to all corners of the country with the goal of converting people to Christianity.

In this section, I laid out some of the different perspectives more generally speaking on magic and sorcery as practiced by Muslim communities in the pre- and early modern periods. This includes perspectives by an admittedly selection group of Muslim sources (i.e., Ibn Khaldun, Hadith compilations, Qur'anic texts) and non-Muslim sources (i.e., Thomas Patrick Hughes and the *Dictionary of Islam*). Both groups contain diverse views on the subject, however the differences arguably lie *not* in the extent to which they see *siḥr* as legitimate *per se*, but instead in the extent to which they view *siḥr* as an authentically Islamic form of practice. For Ibn Khaldun, *siḥr* exists, and there are some questions as to the specific iterations of *siḥr* and whether or not they are licit or illicit. That is to say, that those who engage in *siḥr*—even of the less than desirable forms—it is never debated whether or not these people are authentic Muslims. To compare, for Hughes, the use of divination practices such as those outlined in the *Javahir al-Khamsa* (and related texts) actively disqualifies practitioners from being able to claim an authentic Muslim identity on account of their effectively being quasi-Hindus (or Buddhists). Hughes, the nineteenth-century non-Muslim Anglican missionary, has a much more restrictive notion of who can and cannot be Muslim than does Ibn Khaldun, the thirteenth-century Moroccan intellectual. To be fair, most of Hughes' experience comes from decades spent in South Asia, where he was no doubt aware of Muslims' overall minority status, while Ibn Khaldun is writing in a Muslim majority setting. However, even with this qualification, these remain important differences. The remaining sections of this chapter provide three case studies for specific divination texts that may be classified as forms of magic or sorcery, as well as their respective reception by scholars.

3.1 *Mīz al-Nafas* ("The Distinction of the Breath")[64]

The text we examine in detail comes from a very different branch on the proverbial *'ilm-i dam* family tree. Titled *Mīz al-Nafas* ("The Distinction of the Breath," it forms part of the Delhi Persian collection held at the British Library in London. Though it begins with the stereotypically Muslim formula, *bismillah al-rahman al-rahim* ("In the name of God, the compassionate, the caring") and praise for the Prophet Muhmmad and his family, the British Library handwritten catalogue includes a note that this manuscript should be classified as a Hindu text. The text is not dated at the end, and is written in scribal nasta'līq script. This text is one entry among ten others within a miscellaneous work on Sufism, logic, physiognomy, medicine, sexology, comprised of eleven items from at least two separate sources. The present text on *'ilm-i dam* is the fourth entry ("796d"). The entries are written on the same type of paper and use the same combination of "archaic scribal hands, datable to the mid to late sixteenth century. Sultanate-style scribal naskh occasionally including early hybrid forms of scribal nasta'līq."[65] The original binding is missing; however, it was rebound in the India Office Library red leather cover, stamped 28 June 1916. Presumably at the same time, the folios were rebound and remounted with new gutters; a net overlap was applied for conservation purposes, and "the margins severely cropped." It is in fragile condition, and there are some -thus far indecipherable- ownership marks at the very beginning of the volume.[66]

This is a key part of the story: we have a group of texts that are clearly related to one another, but of course they all come to us through the ages with a slightly different story. Sometimes it is part of a Sufi mixed bag. Sometimes we find our breathing text as part of

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[64] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 57b-63a.
[65] Ibid.
[66] See Blochmann's comment recorded below in the detailed discussion of the Delhi Persian collection for some possible hint to who may have owned or at least, possessed, these manuscripts before the British.

compendium of medical techniques and practices. Sometimes it is a stand-alone text – this last

iteration is perhaps the one that stands out the most in terms of manuscript practices from the

pre-modern period, before the printing press or lithograph techniques were on the scene that

greatly facilitated the production of texts on a much larger scale. Sometimes we find the name of

a copyist or translator, and sometimes even the name of his patron. Sometimes our text is found

scrawled in the margin of something else, literally marginalized with relation to something that

someone else deemed more central and more important.

Sub-section: 3.1.1 – Technical analysis of *Miz al-Nafas*

With these initial "facts of the case" in hand, let us turn to a more detailed examination of

the text itself. Following the *basmala* and various praises of the Prophet Muhammad and his

family, the text includes an introductory section in which the translator, Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn

Bukhārī details his encounter with a Sufi leader, one Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn [Bengālī] at a shrine in

Gujarat, Pīrānpatan (Narhvālah, Gujarat?). Jalāl al-Dīn is described as being "a perfect man,

widely experienced who had expertise in every science" (*mardī kāmil va darvīsh sādiq va*

jihāndīdeh dar har 'ilm dast rasī dāsht). He had a treatise in the Hindavi language on the science

of the breath (*pīsh-i īshān risāleh būd dar zabān-i hindavī dar 'ilm-i dam).*[67] The precise

meaning of "Hindavi" is unclear, since this could refer to Sanskrit or to a more vernacular

language. We then read about the locale where this exchange reportedly took place: "At the time

when he came to Pīrānpatan, he stayed there awhile, he paid a lot of attention to this servant [i.e.,

the author], and he said "put this treatise into the Persian language."[68] In this passage, the

implication is that the author was already at Pīrānpatan when the shaykh arrives, but this is

ambiguous at best, as the order of arrival could easily be reversed. It is striking that while the

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[67] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 57b
[68] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 57b.

shaykh "had experience in every science," he nonetheless still required the services of someone like Burhan al-Din, who had the requisite linguistic abilities to render this text into Persian. One is left with the impression that the shaykh possessed the physical object of the text, but lacked the ability to access its meaning. The author includes no other information that would indicate the intended purpose of the text. Was it purely for the shaykh's private use? Did he intend to use it in lessons to his disciples? We are left to wonder about the various possibilities. We do get a hint as to the text's overall genre in the next section, where we read that "the travelers on the path into gnosis have spoken of the realities of existence, and presented realities of wonders and rarities." The key terms here of travelers, gnosis[69], "realities of existence," and "wonders and rarities" all point towards language characteristic of Sufi texts. In this passage, we see some of the framing concepts for the treatise as a whole. There are Arabic plurals paired with Persian plurals, metaphysical references, then also key terms placing this text within the "wonders and rarities" (*'ajā'ib wa ghrā'ib*) literature.

As mentioned above, this author deploys Arabic terms for abstract or technical vocabulary at times while using Persian terms to refer to physical objects in the world. The clearest example of this is in his discussion of the solar breath and its relationship to the physical sun:

> If the sun (*aftāb*) rise is on the rising of the lunar breath (*dam-i qamrī*), [then] its setting will be on the rising of the solar breath (*dam-i shamsī*). This hour is better. If the sun rise is on the rising of the solar breath (*dam-i shamsī*) [then] its setting is on the rising of the lunar breath, it is better yet still.[70]

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[69] See Chapter One for an overview of *ma'arifa(t)* and its possible meanings as compared to *'ilm*, including one authority's contention that *ma'arifa* should not be translated as gnosis.

[70] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 59a.

This sub-section of the text includes repeated discussion of the relationship between the celestial objects of sun and moon and their respective conjunction or disjunction with the solar and lunar breath. The conjunction of the celestial object and the related breath is auspicious, while the disjunction between them is definitively inauspicious. This explicit discussion of the celestial world is the closest we get to astrology of the type found in the *Kāmarū Pančāšikā*, the *Muḥiṭ-i Ma'arifat*, as well as the various Sanskrit and Hindi *svarodaya* texts. As such it marks this entry as a bit of an outlier amongst the shorter entries in the *'ilm-i dam* corpus. Azfar Moin's work on astrology during and after the Timurid period establishes the importance of this type of conjunction (*qiran*) for predicting the success not only of specific actions, but even more critically for horoscopes taken at birth.

The second chapter of the text engages more with the channels connecting the human body (microcosm) to the universal macrocosm, referring to these in general as "states of the breath" (*aḥvāl-i dam*):

> First, that the entire human body (*tamām-i vujūd adamī*) is held together with veins (*rig-hā*). It is necessary that one of these veins has knowledge (*khabr*). Second, namely that the veins of the body are the source of the human breath (*rig-hā'i vujūd-i minshā'i nafas ādamī*), which appears from those veins. Third, one should know that each breath [*nafas*] individually goes by three paths (*bar seh tarīq jārī*). The first is from the right side, they say it is solar (*shamsī*). The second is from the left side, they say it is lunar (*qamrī)*. The third is in the middle of two nostrils, they say it is heavenly [*asmānī*]. Every breath [*dam*] has a special quality.[71]

Note that in the space of a few lines, the translator uses *nafs* and *dam* - both times apparently referring to the breath. What could we make of this – does it reflect different terms in the Hindavi text he is translating, or does it mean that he conceptualizes the breath in multiple ways,

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[71] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 57b-58a.

thus necessitating that he render it in the two main options available to him in Persian? It could also be a style choice, showing off for his spiritual patron and other readers of this translation. Unlike other Persian texts on the breath, such as that by Amir Khusraw that will feature in Chapter Four, *Miz-i Nafas* is not written in a poetic form where the syllable count can be such an important factor, and which would explain some author's use of *dam* as opposed to *nafas*. When he refers to "solar breath" or "heavenly breath," etc., he does so exclusively with *dam*. This is a prime example where an author uses Arabic for technical terms, here *nafas*, *shamsī*, and *qamrī* in place of *dam*, *aftāb*, and *mehtāb*. The "three paths" here are not directly linked to the three principle *nadis*/channels, but the similarities are striking. Noteworthy also is the idea that the veins or nerves (*rig-hā*) of the body are the source of the breath. Some of the *svarodaya* texts reviewed in Chapter One bear out some of the similarities.

The text then proceeds to classify different types of actions with the sun, moon, or heavenly breath. Almost all types of actions are divided up between the first two categories. Additionally, we see that it is difficult to discern the precise nature of differences between the two groups of actions. For example, the lunar breath is associated with "the benefit of generosity, [being] occupied with God, killing with poison, giving bitterness, coming and going to someone's home; see that every action is connected to these things."[72] At the same time, the solar breath is associated with "making war with an enemy, eating things, bathing, having sex, going to see the king, giving poison, killing someone from amongst enemies, and whatever is related to these things."[73] One of the only entries tied to the heavenly breath reads: "every action that is on the path towards God (*ḥaqq*), start with the heavenly breath (*dam āsmanī*)."[74] Diving the precise

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[72] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 58a.
[73] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 58a.
[74] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 58a.

logic of the differentiation between the actions associated the solar and lunar breaths is a task best left to those with more compete knowledge than this "humble servant." Both include administering poison and killing an enemy. The former group includes generosity and being occupied with God. The latter category combines these with the intimate bodily functions of eating, bathing, and sex, as well as going before a king or other important figure.

The last part of this section on the "states of the breath" introduces several new technical terms that will show up repeatedly throughout the remainder of the text:

> If somebody wants to go on a short journey, let him go with the solar breath, but on the condition that the breath should be *complete* (*kamiliyyat*). Every breath that should be *empty* (*khālī*), let him ignore it. In the breath of *fullness* (*purri*), let him expel it. If there is *fullness* in the lunar breath, go out with the left foot. If there is *fullness* in the solar breath, go out with the right foot. Whoever acts in this sequence, his action does not fall into the danger of disaster and he reaches his goal by the best path, if God wills.[75]

Here we see the combination of the solar/lunar distinction alongside the introduction of breath classifications as complete (*kamiliyyat*), full (*purrī*), and empty (*khālī*). I would hypothesize that the "full" breath refers to a full inhalation, while the empty breath refers to a complete exhalation, and that the "complete" breath refers to the moment when one has completed inhaling and exhaling, just before beginning the next breathing cycle. Note that the correlation between lunar breath and left foot vs. solar breath and right foot maintains the connection between lunar and left side vs. solar and right side that we see noted in other entries to the *'ilm-i dam* corpus.

The next section introduces the reader to the "influences of the breath," which begins with the typology of the five elements. I address this specific issue in comparison to other

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[75] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 58a. Emphasis added.

members of the *'ilm-i dam* corpus in Chapter One. The rest of this section goes onto describe

bodily postures for seated meditation and visualization practices:

> One sits and places the big toe of the left foot under one's seat and seals the
> external senses with the fingers with the root whereby both thumbs are in the ears,
> two index fingers on the eyes, both middle fingers are in the nostrils, both ring
> fingers are on the upper lip, both pinkie fingers are on the lower lip. For the inner
> senses [**61a**] know that with the fingers mentioned, they have an inner (lit. hidden,
> *mahfī*) eye that is in between the eye-brows, at that time hold the breath (*dam-
> khūd-rā dar ān vaqt ḥabs konad*). In that state, the color will appear. If one sees
> the color yellow, it is analogous to the earthy breath. If one sees the color white, it
> is analogous to the watery breath. If one sees the color red, it is analogous to the
> fiery breath. If one sees the color green, it is analogous to the airy breath. If one
> sees the color white, it is analogous to the heavenly breath.[76]

These instructions are easy to follow and leave the practitioner with a clear path towards the

visualization exercises. Note the specific mention of the "inner" eye located in between the

eyebrows, which would certainly strike many as comparable to the "third eye" mentioned in

various Hindu, Buddhist, and other Indic sources. This passage provides additional evidence that,

at least as far as this author is concerned, *'ilm-i dam* is different from *ḥabs-i dam*. He uses the

term *ḥabs konad* for "holding [the breath], and we have already seen how he deploys the term

'ilm-i dam when describing the work as a whole, even though the title itself is *Mīz al-Nafas*.

 Once the practitioner has managed to seal of the external senses, and is seated properly,

and is holding their breath, then a color will appear. These colors match up with the typology of

the five elements of the breath discussed as detailed in Chapter One. A curious point is that two

of the five breaths – fiery and heavenly – are both described in connection to the color white.

This begs the question: how would the practitioner differentiate between a "fiery" white and a

"heavenly" white? The next section offers a clue: "in each breath whether it is watery, fiery, airy,

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[76] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 60b-61a.

or earthy, human states come to pass, and one who is wise (*aqil*) will understand." What are these states? The author provides that information in the following passage:

> In each breath, a different human state comes forward, that in that state (*ḥālat*), taste or other factors apply as these states of the breath are known, depending on which breath is flowing. Whereas, with the earthy breath, in human existence (*vujūd ādamī*) one finds the smell of dry sandalwood, and the influence of sandalwood on one's body is apparent, and a state is apparent that in this state happiness is not apparent, nor is it known. With the watery breath, in human existence one finds that joy and happiness is apparent, and in that state hunger and thirst are unknown. With the fiery breath, in human existence, one finds warmth and hear, nor is it apparent. With the airy breath, sometime you see air in both nostrils flowing equally, and more or less what one must recognize is that the airy breath is flowing. However, if one wants the hidden heart (*makhfī dil*), one will be able.[77]

What appears here is an intense connection between the "human state" that the practitioner notices through the following process: first, entering into the meditative visualization posture; second, seeing the color; third, connecting that color with the appropriate breath; fourth, understanding the sense-experiences (especially taste and smell) as well as the emotional content that are then associated with the that breath. James McHugh's work on smell in Indian religions is a helpful resource here, as he provides an excellent survey for studying the sense of smell in South Asia, as well as detailed chapters on how Indian Sanskrit texts from Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain communities discuss smell and all of its powers.[78]

The next sections deal with predicting the results of pregnancy (i.e., sex and health of the child), military affairs, rain, and the agricultural harvest. These passages employ similar terminology to other *'ilm-i dam* texts. The author employs one last contrasting binary several places throughout the text, but perhaps most clearly here at the end:

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[77] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 61a.
[78] James McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

> If the king, prince, caliph – spiritual or worldly (*dīnī yā dīnāvī*) wants to sit on the throne or on prayer mat [*bar sijādeh*], he sits with the moon breath that is earthy or watery, and will have spiritual and worldly victory. If he sits with the sun breath that is fiery, airy, or heavenly, from that seat he will go out or die.[79]

The text ends with instructions on how to change which breath (solar or lunar) is flowing:

> If one wants the breath to be the opposite, meaning the sun breath is flowing, to make the moon breath flowing, take the elbow of the left hand and take it out. The moon breath is flowing, and likewise for the sun breath [do the?] opposite of that.[80]

The text then ends abruptly with the phrase, "Peace and completion" (*va al-salām bi-l-ittmām*).

In relation to the earlier discussion of sorcery (*siḥr*) and the range of attitudes towards it by different Muslim and non-Muslim authors, there is one explicit reference in *Miz al-Nafas* in a single passage regarding the issue of a husband's sexual access to his wife when she is tired. The reader is advised to sit on the side of the complete breath (*dam-i kamāliyyat*), *et voilá*, "without magic or sorcery, she will be obedient" (*bi-ghayr-i siḥr va jādū, maṭī' gardad*).[81] In this very casual reference, included at the beginning of the section entitled "Influences of the Breath" (*ta'sir-i dam*), we see the author actively resist the categorization of *'ilm-i dam* as either magic or sorcery. This declaration raises a number of important questions. If not magic or sorcery, than how might the author himself classify this text? What is at stake in the practice's classification as magic or sorcery? Is the anxiety about this classification due to the perceived link between those categories and non-Muslim customary practices? As discussed above, Fahd's documentation, especially of *ruqya*, appears to indicate that there is at least some evidence Prophetic approval (and participation) in various types of "sorcery," but how important would that have been to Sayyid Burhan al-Din writing in Gujarat sometime during the 16th century? Is there a link drawn

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[79] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 62b.
[80] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 62b.
[81] *Miz al-Nafas*. Delhi Persian collection 796d, British Library, London. Ff. 58b.

in any way with the perception of certain types of sorcery in the pre-Islamic Arabian context and what our author was familiar with living in Gujarat roughly one thousand years later? These questions are part of a thorny legacy in which is becomes difficult to distill the many different layers of "origins" and "influence" with analytical satisfaction. Shahab Ahmed's widely-read book, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* is one of the most recent and widely read monographs that engages with many of these issues. I mention it as a specific example because, although Ahmed repeatedly takes on the issue of origins and normativity, nowhere does he address anything that we might understand as magic, sorcery, or occultism.

With this review of the text itself completed, we will now turn back to its reception and the implications thereof for our understanding of it within the broader *'ilm-i dam* corpus. What does it mean that a text beginning with the *basmala* and praise for the Prophet Muhammad's family is then classified as "Hinduism" by a British librarian? Compared to Browne's manuscript, Cambridge V.21, BL DP 796d (and a closely related text, *Risalah dar dam zadan*, described in Chapter One) may read as more authentically "Islamic" in nature. And yet...perhaps we read too much into the presence of the *basmala* and even praise of the Prophet. Could it be that the modern obsession with labels and identities simply does not apply to the same extent that we want it to in the case of manuscripts translated and copied in the 16th century? The important thing about the text could be simply that it promises great powers to those who read it, thus the demand to translate it from local Indian languages into Persian could simply mark the desire on the part of Persephone audiences to consume this text. As the hadith account goes, "seek knowledge, even if in China." In this situation, one needs not travel like the famous pre-modern Moroccan jurist, Ibn Battuta, in order to find knowledge. By contrast, one need simply to learn enough knowledge of the local languages that one could translate a text into Persian. The

"traveling" taking place is of an all-together different order, one in which we cross linguistic, religious, and perhaps ethnic lines in the pursuit of knowledge. I would argue that there is more pragmatism going on at the level of courtiers and rulers wanting to ensure their continued status as courtiers and rulers than there is the pursuit of a tolerant and pluralistic society that would satisfy 21st century notions of liberalism and diversity. The latter may have developed, but in the case of the science of the breath, I would suggest a great of caution before assuming that Akbar, Abu'l Fazl, and their contemporaries are truly invested in creating some type of "united nations" under the auspices of the all-powerful Mughal state.

With this portrait of the manuscript itself complete, I now turn to the second thread in its story, namely how this text was received and interpreted once it was removed from India and found its way to England as part of the British Empire's expropriation of materials from its colonies.

Sub-section 3.2: A History of the Delhi Persian collection

Unlike the other two manuscripts upon which I focus in this chapter, there is no singular acquisition or origin story for *Miz al-Nafas*. Instead, we have a much murkier picture in which the singular significance of this one text has to be weighed as part of a much larger collection that was taken from India and brought to England in the years and decades following the 1857 rebellion. As such, the following section is intended firstly as a history of the "Delhi Persian" collection that now resides within the archives at the British Library, and secondly as an argument regarding the ethical questions raised by this historical record. In the same way that Edward Granville Brown and Alfred von Kremer reveal their biases through the way that they classify the manuscripts detailed above, so too do the various colonial officials who participate in the acquisition and cataloguing process for the Delhi Persian collection. One difference is that

neither Browne nor von Kremer played active roles in the colonial administration. Browne remained in academia (although he was active in advocating that the British government adopt a position in favor of the Iranian constitution), while Austria had no colonies to administer (even though von Kremer held a variety of diplomatic positions). By contrast, in the case of *Miz al-Nafas*, there is a direct line that we can draw quite easily between the manuscript, its classification, and the colonial-era administration of India. Thus, this makes it the most important illustration of the combinatory effect of our twin regimes of power and knowledge.

The story of the Delhi Persian collection cannot be told without a brief outline of the India Office Library (first known as the Library of the East India Company), the administrative entity that housed it before it, too, was moved to the British Library. A history of the India Office Library was penned by no less an Islamicist than A.J. Arberry (d. 1969), who held the position of Assistant Librarian before World War II, and before he occupied academic positions at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London (1944-47) and Cambridge University (1947-1969), and published widely, including translations of the Qur'an and Rumi's writings. His history of the India Office Library is a rich source, providing perspective from roughly eighty years ago as to how a then-junior scholar saw this collection and its overall place in the colonial archive.

Arberry comments on the "Bijapur Collection," which was the remnants of the Adil-Shahs' library, discovered by French scholar M. C. d'Ochoa at the shrine of Asar Mahall.[82] He cites part of the India Office Library record on the affair, drawing on records between H.B.E. Frere, the local commissioner, and his higher ups. Frere begins his story by complaining that "throughout Beejapoor and its neighborhood I could not find, among the many thousand

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[82] Arberry, *The India Office Library: A Historical Sketch*, London: India Office, 1938, pg. 83.

Mahomedan inhabitants, a single Arabic scholar competent to give any trustworthy account of the contents of the volumes."[83] Arberry glosses over Frere's comment (in the same letter), that not only are there no "Mahomedan inhabitants" who can aid in this task. Arberry's presentation emphasizes Frere's bemoaning of the fact that not every Muslim in Bijapur knows Arabic well enough to aid him in cataloguing manuscripts that belonged to a local ruling family, which in turn were kept at a saint's shrine complex. Frere credits a local scholar and physician, Humeed-ood-Deen Hukeem, "a Mahomedan gentleman of great respectability and of reputed skill as a physician" from Hyderabad, who served as a physician with the Raja, with overseeing the cataloguing effort. "He was said to be a very accomplished Arabic scholar, and though a cripple from his birth, unable to rise without assistance, and sorely afflicted with St. Vitus' dance,[84] he *cheerfully undertook a journey in the hot weather to see what could be done, and remained for many months at Beejapoor*."[85] Frere is sympathetic to Hummed-ood-Deen Hukeem's tribulations, which he cites again in a letter requesting that the British Government provide him with some measure of compensation for the work that he has done in furnishing the British with a catalogue written in Urdu, which they in turn translate into English. The compensation is not only for Humeed-ood-Deen Hukeem, but also for the team assembled to help him in this monumental task, which included "three or four writers whom he employed in extracting, reading, and writing the catalogue from his dictation, as he can himself with difficulty hold a

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[83] British Library India Office records, H.B. E. Frere, letter to Government of Bombay, 17 December 1849, cited in Arberry, *The India Office Library: A Historical Sketch*, London: India Office, 1938, pg. 83.

[84] Otherwise known as "Sydenham's chorea," this is a disease that causes uncontrollable jerk-like movements (St. Vitus is the patron saint for dancers). Not only is Humeed-ood-Deen unable to walk without assistance, but he carried the additional burden of an additional disease.

[85] British Library India Office records, H.B. E. Frere, letter to Government of Bombay, 17 December 1849, cited in Arberry, *The India Office Library: A Historical Sketch*, London: India Office, 1938, pg. 83.

pen."[86] The compensation ended up at 300 Rupees, a collection of books in Arabic and Persian, and a shawl.[87]

Arberry then moves on to the Delhi Collection, albeit without providing any of the details readily available to him at that time, for they are housed in the same binder along with the detailed accounts upon which he draws to describe the Bijapur, Leyden, and Hastings Collections. In reference to the Delhi Collection, he writes that "it is hardly to be doubted that the so-called Delhi Collection would have also perished, had not circumstances conspired to save these books likewise. This collection of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu manuscripts represents all that was left, in 1858, of the once magnificent library of the Moghul Emperors."[88] I will fill in the substantial holes left by Arberry's account below. While this once was a truly amazing collection, as described by Mendelslo in the late 17th century, it was much reduced by Arberry's time. Indeed,

> less than one quarter, numerically seen, remained when the last of the Delhi Emperors lost his throne; and of this quarter, only about one fifth can have belonged to the old library which Mandelslo saw, since the rest are of more recent date; while the rich bindings, on which the traveler based, apparently, his valuation, have utterly vanished. Already as early at least as 1810, manuscripts from this library which had by some means or other come into the possession of private collectors were being sold by public auction in London[89]: and it is probably no exaggeration to say, that there is hardly a single major library of oriental manuscripts in East or West today, public or private, which does not contain at least some items that were formerly the pride of the Moghuls.[90]

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[86] India Office Library, MSS EUR B186, "Bijapur Collection."

[87] At a later date, I intend to conduct a study of the available evidence regarding the acquisition of several collections beyond the Delhi Persian, especially the Bijapur Collection. Present space – even within the full dissertation – does not allow me to fully investigate these practices here, so the discussion in this chapter will have to suffice as an example of much larger patterns in which British officials relate to manuscripts specifically as fetishized objects that must be procured for the greater glory of the Empire.

[88] Arberry, *The India Office Library: A Historical Sketch*, London: India Office, 1938, pg. 84.

[89] Here Arberry notes that the reader should consult *A Catalogue of the Library of the late William Platel, Esq* (London, 1810); the text of this advertisement is preserved in the India Office Library records, see British Library MSS Eur B186, "Delhi Collection," folio 3.

[90] Arberry, *The India Office Library*, pp. 84-85.

Arberry's standards for what constitutes a worthwhile manuscript are quite specific; he goes on to say that "in the whole Delhi Collection, as it now stands, there is not a single item of sufficient merit in calligraphy or illumination to excite the interest of the connoisseur," apart from a few scattered references. Fortunately, Arberry's preferences need not prevent current scholars from taking full advantage of what remains of the Mughal royal library.

While Arberry's "Historial Sketch" is a helpful resource for the India Office Library in general, the manuscript at the center of this section is found in the Delhi Persian collection in particular. As such, we now turn to a detailed examination of this collection and a review of the documentation available regarding its acquisition by British officials in the aftermath of the 1857 rebellion. The existence of the Delhi Persian collection at the British Library is in and of itself illustrative of the way in which colonial processes ("regimes of power") intertwine with our received understandings of how the constructed "other" (in this case, South Asians) believes, speaks, feels, acts, and thinks ("regimes of knowledge"). Consisting of some 4,700 volumes, this is a massive collection, the bulk of which originally formed part of the Mughal royal library held at the Red Fort in Delhi. In the aftermath of the failed uprising against British colonial rule in India in 1857, this collection was removed (some would say looted) from the Mughal site and eventually found its way to London in the latter stages of the 19th century. In the time being, the manuscripts spent years sitting outside, completely exposed to the elements variously in Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay. The cream of the crop was auctioned off in Delhi following its acquisition. The East India Company had acquired booty, which was then legitimated through the sale at auction, for the buyers could show an official bill of sale that they had legitimately purchased their volumes. The British Library would come to receive the unsold items, as post-auction it was determined that the leftovers would be retained by the government.

The archives at the British Library, which itself now houses the entirety of the India

Office Library, contain a number of documents reflecting the eagerness of colonial officials to

secure this collection. Of key importance is *Bengal General Orders, 38*, issued in late November

1857, signed by Colonel R.J. H. Birch, Secretary to the Government of India. This order

specifies that the Prize Agents assigned to Delhi "for the collection of booty captured from the

mutineers and other persons in rebellion against the Government…a clear distinction exists, in

cases of re-capture, between property of the State originally captured by an enemy in time of

war, and similar property seized by rebels or mutineers during an insurrection."[91] The full order

continues:

> In the former case, the property re-captured is in general treated as property of the hostile State, and becomes subject to the laws of prize.
> But in an insurrection, such as the present one, the troops of the State whose property has been pillaged by its own subjects, or by foreigners aiding such subjects in their treason, when they retake such property from the plunderers, merely retake it on behalf of the Government, and acquire no legal right of prize or of property, although they have strong claims on the liberality of the Government.
> The principles apply also to the property of private individuals plundered by the insurgents and retaken by the troops of the State. Such private property can in no case be deemed lawful prize, when clearly identified and claimed by the original owner…
> In all cases of clear identification of property, restitution may be made to the owners on the spot; provided that in the case Natives they shall prove, to the satisfaction of the Committee, that they have not been guilty of any offence for which their property would be liable to forfeiture, and have to the best of their ability, rendered active assistance to the British Government: and when claims are not clearly established, or the property belongs to any person deceased, the orders of Government are to be awaited before delivery…[92]

This document raises a host of question. Why is this included in the British Library

records? What does this say about how the British Government viewed the Delhi Collection? If

these items did not belong to them *before* the rebellion, but apparently they did belong to them

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[91] "Bengal General Order No. 38", as copied in British Library MSS Euro B186, "Delhi Collection," folio 4.
[92] "Bengal General Order No. 38", as copied in British Library MSS Euro B186, "Delhi Collection," folio 4.

after the rebellion, then was this collection seen as the "private property of individuals" or of the Mughal government, and is that even the best term to describe how the British thought about the Mughals at this time? One cannot escape the sense that a general atmosphere of chaos ruled over Delhi, and by extension, the British colonial system in India, during and after the events of 1857. While the records of auctions held earlier in the nineteenth century indicate that, as Arberry mentioned, some components to the Mughal royal library had found their way onto the private market through various means—both licit and otherwise—this is the moment in which it appears that whatever was left suddenly was up for grabs.

Before these leftovers were sent to London, Heinrich (Henry) Blochmann created a hand list with very scant notations,[93] possible on the basis of notes made by Bengali munshis in Calcutta. Upon receipt at the India Office, the collection was separated out according to language, hence the creation of "Delhi Persian," "Delhi Arabic," "Delhi Urdu," and so forth. During the 1910's and 1920's, many of the volumes were re-bound with red leather covers, and conservation efforts were undertaken through the application of netting to the folios. In the 1920's, Nawab Syed Hussein Bilgrami made a catalogue and classified things according to subject and quality (i.e., "worthless," "rare," and so forth).[94] When reflecting on the understudied nature of *'ilm-i dam*, we have to acknowledge the academician preference for printed and edited forms, which are the hallmark of "refined" texts. This in and of itself provides an explanation, albeit partial, for why this specific genre of text has received so little attention over the years.

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[93] Blochmann (d. 1878) was eventually head of the Calcutta Madrasa, and was a major scholar of Persian literature and Indian history. One of his lasting contributions, a critical edition and English translation of Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak's *A'in-i Akbari* is the central focus of Chapter Three. See J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Blochmann, Heinrich Ferdinand," *Encyclopædia Iranica,* Vol. IV, Fasc. 3, pp. 314-315; (accessed on 6 August, 2017).

[94] Nawab Syed Hussain Bilgrami (1842-1926), served Sir Salar Jung, and later, the Nizam of Hyderabad, as Private Secretary.

At one point, many of the volumes were re-bound by librarians in Britain, which no doubt has greatly contributed to their preservation. British Library staff are presently hard at work editing and revising the catalogue entries for each and every volume from within this collection. Despite their work, many questions remain regarding the precise nature of the collection. Was it affiliated with a particular religious school or *madhdhab*? Was it the archive of a particular group? What was left of the royal family archive? The codicological evidence indicates that this was not a Mughal imperial work. Was this work produced for a private audience as opposed to some type of public sale? Was this an author's copy, that is something to which he would refer in making other copies for sale or on the request of a patron? Are scribes working orally from an established script, i.e., a setting in which a master reads from his text and students essentially transcribe the text as part of their lessons?

While the previous two detailed examples in this chapter illustrate cases where materials fitting into the *'ilm-i dam* corpus were acquired or interpreted by European scholars, this last example sheds light on a very different manifestation of the interplay between our regimes of power and knowledge. For in this last case, we will see some of the more intimate manifestations of how these two regimes combine.

The British Library's archives contain a great deal of information on the Delhi Persian collection, which I will summarize below. Housed along with papers pertaining to manuscript collections acquired through auction and other means from across the South and East Asian portions of the Empire. In the section on the "Dehli MSS," the archives maintain copies of correspondence between colonial officers regarding the acquisition, care, and disposal of a treasure trove of documents.

First, there is a list of advertisements for various mentions of the royal library from different Mughal emperors. The first auction, "of the very valuable and curious Collection of Manuscripts, collected in Hindostan…gathered at great Expense by the late Dr. Samuel Guise" was held by Leigh and Sotheby…on Friday, July 3, 1812, and Four following Days (Sunday excepted), as 12 o'Clock."[95] This collection was compiled at Surat from 1788 to 1795, and the advertisement indicates that Mandelaloe's Travels includes references to Emperor Akbar's library, composed of "24,000 Volumes, valued at Thirty-two Lacs, Thirty-one Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-five Crowns."[96] Additionally, we read of a catalogue of the library of one William Platel, Esq. of Peterborough, including "his entire and interesting collection of manuscripts, in the Persian, Arabic, Hindustani, Hindwi, Bengali, Tamil, Malabaric, Telingi and Armenian languages; for the most part perfect and in fine condition, having formed part of the Library of the late Mugul Emperor Shah Aslum[97]…which will be sold by auction, by Leigh and S. Sotheby…on Thursday, December 13, 1810, and Eight following Days, at 12 o'Clock, (Sunday excepted.)"[98]

It is not clear if any of these manuscripts form part of what we now refer to as "the Delhi Persian" collection, but at minimum, these recording of these auctions indicate that for decades prior to the 1857 rebellion, British agents were deeply invested in acquiring Indian manuscripts. As I will argue throughout this section, this interest is two-fold, for it is through possessing

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[95] *Eur B186/*Delhi MSS/folio 1, British Library, London.

[96] *Eur B186/*Delhi MSS/folio 2, British Library, London. The British Library record provides the reference to the Travels as "See Manelsle's [sic] Travels [English version, published as an appendix to The Voyage & Travels of the Ambassadors, London, 1662], p. 48: "Foure and twenty Thousand Manuscripts, so richly bound, that they were valued at six Millions, four hundred sixty three Thousand seven hundred thirty one Ropias; that is, three Millions, two hundred thirty one Thousand, eight hundred sixty five Crowns and a half."

[97] This is a mistake in the record, for it must be a reference to Shah Alam II, d. 1806.

[98] *Eur B186/*Delhi MSS/folio 3, British Library, London.

objects—specifically manuscripts—that British forces worked to possess the land (and peoples) who had produced those objects.

Nevertheless, once Prize Agents reported that several thousand manuscripts were available for sale, then the records reflect a veritable scramble to ensure that the British Government acquired them as quickly as possible. A communique dated August 28, 1858 from Sir George Frederick Edmonstone to Captain W.N. Lees, stationed in Allahabad, states

> The Governor General being anxious to purchase for the Government of India such of the manuscripts in question, as may prove to be of real value, has caused a request to be conveyed to the Prize Agents for the postponement of the sale until the 1st of October in order that the collection may be examined, and a selection made of those which it may be desirable to secure.
> But *as there is at Delhi no European Officers competent to pass a trustworthy opinion on the value of Oriental manuscripts, and as the duty of selection cannot be entrusted with confidence to any native*, the Governor General is desirous that you yourself should at once proceed to Delhi for the purpose of examining the collection, and purchasing all those manuscripts which you may consider to be rare or really valuable.[99]

The remainder of the letter orders Captain Lees to leave his post at once and proceed with due haste to Delhi in order to effect a thorough examination of the manuscripts before the now postponed auction. The above passage demonstrates several things. First, that a report had been sent up the chain of command from the Commissioner in Delhi, informing the officials in Calcutta that a group of valuable manuscripts were going to be sold by the Prize Agents. Unfortunately, there is not information available in the archives on exactly how these manuscripts came to be in the possession of the Prize Agents. This has all the appearance of

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[99] India Public Consultations: Range clxxxviii, 57. Fort William, September 10, 1858. No. 42. – From G.F. Edmonstone, Esquire…to Captain W.N. Lees, L.L.D., Secretary to the Board of Examiners, No. 369, dated Allahabad, the 28th August 1858. Copied in …*Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 5, British Library, London. Emphasis added.

shadowy figures using a public auction in order to legitimate the chain of possession of what are certainly stolen goods. This is manuscript-laundering.

The fact that there is intense interest in these manuscripts raises a number of vexing questions. Why precisely, other than their value on the open market, are these books of such interest to the British officials? What is about them, and what do they signify to these governmental officials, that they do not want them to be sold at auction? Second, what are we do make of the statement at the beginning of the second paragraph, that there no competent "European Officers" in Delhi who can evaluate the manuscripts, and that that "the duty of selection cannot be entrusted with confidence to any native…"? This in and of itself says quite a bit about the general atmosphere in Delhi during the weeks immediately following the rebellion, that there was a great deal of mistrust of "natives," never mind that much of the knowledge production that comes out of the British presence in South Asia was accomplished precisely through the cooperation with hundreds of largely unnamed scribes, *pandit*s, *munshi*s, and other experts who possessed the linguistic skills and cultural competency to assist British officers in their efforts to compose a portrait of Indian civilization through studying its ancient texts. The trauma of the rebellion was still fresh, and only white British officers could be trusted in this suddenly serious affair.

Lees' response hints at his exasperation with the higher-ups' demands. He writes that he can't possibly examine the collection in the allocated time, and instead urges the government to simply purchase the entire collection and send it to Calcutta. There is some dispute between Edmonstone and Lees on the matter of purchasing *both* the manuscripts *and* some printed books stored with the manuscripts; eventually it is agreed that the government will purchase all of the material available, manuscript and printed. Lees indicates that he plans to "select the rare books

and sell the rest," before commenting that "the Moulvees are agreed that good prices may be obtained here but no where else."[100] Here we see some indication for the government's interest in the manuscripts: they hope to buy in bulk and then sell the most valuable manuscripts on an individual basis, thus maximizing their profits. Records indicate that the manuscripts were packed in some forty-one cases and transported by Government Bullock Train from Delhi to Allahabad, and then by steamer to Calcutta. A letter from the Commissioner of Delhi, C.B. Saunders, to the Secretary to the Government of India, dated March 29, 1859, indicates that "the entire cost of the works in question amounts to Rupees 14,955."[101] Note the date here, almost two years following the tumult of the rebellion, these manuscripts are only now being transported even though their purchase was effected months earlier. Such is the speed of empire, even in the age of telegraph and steam. The government would go on to realize profits of Rupees 492.4 from the sale of the printed books.[102] This then leaves the minor task of dealing with the remaining booty: some 4,700 manuscripts.

In a move that we cannot help but read as ironic, Lees now recommends that the government provide some funding to hire assistants to conduct the primary work of cataloguing the manuscripts, for he himself is too busy:

> As the cheapest and most expeditious means of accomplishing the task, I propose, with his Lordship's sanction, to direct the Arabic Librarian of the Mahomedan College, with the assistance of two of the senior students, to attend at the College daily for three or four hours. With diligence, and under my superintendence, he ought to classify, arrange, and catalogue these books in six months; and I should suggest that while engaged in this duty, the Librarian be allowed Rupees 20, and each of the students Rupees 10 a month.

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[100] Telegraphic Message from Captain W.N. Lees, to Mr. Edmonstone, Allahabad, dated the 6th September 1858. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 9, British Library, London.

[101] Letter from C.B. Saunders, Esquire, Commissioner of Delhi, to the Secretary to the Government of India, with the Governor General, No. 187A., dated the 29th March 1859. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 10, British Library, London.

[102] Letter from R.H. Davies, Esquire…to the Secretary to the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, No. 482, dated Lahore, the 19th July, 1859. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 12, British Library, London.

I would certainly at the present time have preferred recommending a plan that would not have involved any extra expenditure, but such was not in my power; I have, however, fixed the very lowest possible rate. The College is nearly two miles from the Madrassah, and 10 Rupees a month will only suffice to cover the palkee hire one way, i.e. coming or going.[103]

If we remember, there is a choice comment made by the Edmonstone in the original orders sent to Lees indicating that under no circumstances would the British government entrust the task of evaluating these manuscripts to any native. However now, only a few years later, the person charged with determining the precise contents of these same manuscripts cannot hope to complete the task without enlisting the support of several natives for half the day over a period of six months. That he only requests sufficient funds to pay for half of their transport cost, implying that their actual labors will go uncompensated, is in and of itself illustrative commentary on the attitude that Lees and his ilk took towards "the natives."

From here, the tale of the manuscripts is one of woe and misery, backbiting and righteous indignation. Over a period of several years they are stored in Calcutta, where they are damaged by the combination of monsoon rains, poorly preserved buildings, and miscommunications between Lees and the staff at the madrasa library (where Lees had ordered the manuscripts stored for safekeeping). Lees reports that "though 254 volumes in all were wetted by the rain, only 11 Arabic and 21 Persian are seriously damaged; and of these books only two of the Arabic books, the Shifa of Qázi Aiyáz and the Huliah of Abu Naim, a very rare book, appear to be of value, and none of the Persian."[104] He also lays the blame squarely at the feet of the librarian and

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[103] Letter from Captain W.N. Lees, L.L.D., Secretary to the Board of Examiners, to W. Grey, Esquire, Secretary to the Government of India, No. 199, dated 22nd July 1859. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 13, British Library, London. A "palkee" (spelled "palki" in India today) refers to a palanquin, or non-motorized form of conveyance.

[104] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Damage done to the Delhi Manuscripts." No. 113. From Major W.N. Lees, LL.D., Secretary to the Board of Examiners, to E.C. Bayley, Esquire, Secretary to the Government of India, - No. 38, dated the 8th February 1866." Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 14, British Library, London.

contractors who were conducting work on the madrasa library, including the roof of the room in

which the manuscripts were being stored. Lees is vehement in blaming the librarian in particular:

> The Native who had the key does not reside in the building, and was absent [i.e., during the heavy rain]. It was his duty, <u>no matter where he resides</u>, to have visited the room the moment the rain commenced, and to have done to several times a day every day it lasted; had no repairs been going on, so that, on the first symptoms of leakage, he might have reported the matter to me. He seems not to have thought of his duty or the books in his charge until the morning of the 31st, after it had been raining for several days consecutively…The carelessness of this man was most gross and inexcusable, and he has consequently been dismissed from his situation.[105]

In response to this information, as well as Lees' request for additional funds to be allocated to

repair as much of the damage as possible, he receives a less than friendly reply from his

superiors. They remonstrate with him at length, claiming that it was his responsibility to secure

these manuscripts in classic indirect language of the era:

> I am desired to say that the Governor General in Concil cannot regard it as otherwise than unsatisfactory that manuscripts should not have received more attention and interest at your hands than would appear to have been the case…It was not till nearly five years after the manuscripts were brought down to Calcutta that you made any report at all to Government about them. Then, in May 1864, you suggested that a portion of them should be sold in the cold weather of 1864-65; and, having done this, you apparently took no further trouble about the matter until the orders of Government were accidentally, it would seem, brought to your notice shortly before the cold season of 1865-66.[106]

He responds that in making his report, "it did not occut to me that any blame could be attributed

to me, and I took no pains, therefore, to excuse myself." What follows is the self-righteous

pleading of a man beset by bureaucracy. He quotes Bayley's letter back, specifically the passage

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[105] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Damage done to the Delhi Manuscripts." No. 114. From Major W.N. Lees, L.L.D., Principal of the Madrissah, to Captain W.R. Tucker, R.E., Executive Engineer, Presidency Division, - Dated the 3rd February 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 16, British Library, London. Emphasis original.

[106] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 116.From E.C. Bayley… to Captain W.N. Lees…No. 1889, dated the 27th February 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 18, British Library, London.

stating that Lees could have done more to protect the manuscripts. Then, he launches his counter-offensive:

> *I would beg to state that I was the sole person in India, who, in 1858, when the country was convulsed with rebellion, bestowed a thought upon the valuable manuscripts which were known to exist in the cities of Lucknow and Delhi.* I wrote personally to Lord Canning and to Sir James Outram; and it was on my suggestion, that Lord Canning secured the Delhi books for Government; and Sir James Outram collected some hackery-loads of books at Lucknow, which, after the campaign was over, disappeared. Under the circumstances, it is improbable that, when the Delhi manuscripts were placed under my charge, I would willfully neglect them, and I hope I shall be able to satisfy Government that I bestowed upon them the best care the means placed at my disposal for the purpose would admit of.[107]

On the charge that five years had passed since he had received the manuscripts, Lees responded that "the manuscripts were received by me in 41 beer chests on the 27th April 1859, and I reported what had been done with them, and on their number and condition, on the 22nd July of the same year, or two months and 25 days after their receipt. Government replied to my letter on the 30th July 1859."[108] However later in 1859, Lees was appointed to a new position as Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, over and on top of his other duties. He informed the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal that "the work of all these appointments was too much for one person, but it was not convenient for Government to relieve me of any of my duties."[109] This would lead to serious personal consequences for Lees, for following this level of being overworked in 1859, he writes that "…my health broke down. I was ill the whole of 1860, and with difficulty discharged my proper duties; and in 1861 was compelled to proceed to England

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[107] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 118. From Major W.N. Lees…to E.C. Bayley…No. 71, dated the 10th March 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 20, British Library, London. Emphasis added.

[108] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 118. From Major W.N. Lees…to E.C. Bayley…No. 71, dated the 10th March 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 20, British Library, London.

[109] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 118. From Major W.N. Lees…to E.C. Bayley…No. 71, dated the 10th March 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 20, British Library, London.

on sick certificate."[110] Lees reports that he worked very hard in 1862 and 1863 on the

manuscripts, "in the hope of being able to prepare a valuable report upon them," but found that

due to the condition of the collection, he would need to work "eight or 10 hours a day for at least

two years to prepare any report" to which he would affix his name.[111] It is here that Lees makes

an interesting rhetorical move, for he compares his own case to that of Dr. Aloys Sprenger (d.

1893), the Austrian orientalist who served as principal of Delhi College as well as holding

various roles within the Asiatic Society of Calcutta. Sprenger was sent to Lucknow in 1848 to

perform a task very similar to the one laid at Lees' feet: prepare a catalogue of a royal library full

of manuscripts. Lees also draws a comparison to William Wright (d. 1889), an English orientalist

who catalogued a number of Syriac manuscripts taken from Egyptian monasteries in the mid-

nineteenth-century by English missionaries. Lees takes note of several key differences between

his own charge and those of both Sprenger and Wright:

> When Dr. Sprenger was sent to examine the Library of the Kind of Oude, he was
> relieved of all duty. The books in this Library, it may be assumed, were in a
> somewhat more favorable condition for reporting upon than the Delhi
> manuscripts, yet the Doctor took about two years in performing his task; and,
> when burthened with his other duties, five more in preparing and printing his
> catalogue. Mr. W. Wright was allowed three years to catalogue and report upon
> 800 Syriac manuscripts in the British Museum; the period allowed has expired,
> and he requires two years more to complete his work, though he has no other duty
> whatsoever. And to those who know the difficulty and labor of undertaking of the
> kind, if good work is wanting, these periods of time are not excessive. As thing
> have turned out, it would have been better had I paid less attention to these books;
> but I desired to do my best, and having done so, I did not, nor did Government
> apparently in 1864, conceive that I was deserving of censure.[112]

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[110] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 118. From Major W.N. Lees…to E.C. Bayley…No. 71, dated the 10th March 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/ff. 20-21, British Library, London.

[111] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 118. From Major W.N. Lees…to E.C. Bayley…No. 71, dated the 10th March 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 21, British Library, London.

[112] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 118. From Major W.N. Lees…to E.C. Bayley…No. 71, dated the 10th March 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 21, British Library, London.

Lees concludes his letter by reiterating that he could not be held responsible for damage done to the manuscripts because he had directed the crew conducting repairs on the roof to do so in such a way to protect the manuscripts from the elements, and that they failed to do so. While this can all be read as bureaucratic complaining, one is struck by Lees' statement that life would have been better for him, had he not "bestowed a thought upon" the manuscripts in the Delhi Collection. The record includes an additional letter from an engineer, Tucker, to Lees in which the former offers to pay for some of the costs incurred by Lees in repairing the manuscripts. Of greater interest is the next letter, in which the Officiating Under Secretary to the Government of India, W.E. Ward, writes to Lees with the government's response:

> In reply, I am desired to say that the Governor General in Council is unable to see, in the circumstances stated in your letter, any adequate explanation of the long period of five years which was allowed to elapse before your report on the manuscripts was submitted, and that His Excellency can allow but little weight to the reasons assigned in the 6th paragraph of your letter…[113]

There is no record of a reply by Lees. Once this bureaucratic dispute was resolved, then all that was left was for Lees—along with the librarian and his assistants from the madrasa—to complete the task before them of cataloguing the manuscripts. Lees reports that he has indeed completed this task in September 1866.[114] The following months see a series of letters back and forth regarding the precise date to hold the sale, and the importance of advertising it as widely as possible. This includes the following advertisement for the final sale:

> NOTICE is hereby given that the valuable Oriental Manuscripts, purchased by the Government of India after the fall of Delhi, consisting of rare Works in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, on various subjects, will, under instructions from Government, be sold unreservedly to the highest bidders…[115]

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[113] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 119. From W.E. Ward, Esquire, Officiating Under Secretary to the Government of India, to Major W.N. Lees…No. 3185, dated the 31st March 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 23, British Library, London.

[114] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 2. P. 1658. From Major W.N. Lees, LL.D., Secretary to the Board of Examiners, to E.C. Bayley, Esquire, Secretary to the Government of India, Simla, - No. 262, dated the 6th September 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 24, British Library, London.

[115] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 3. Pp. 468-9. "Proposed sale of the Delhi Manuscripts." No.

In response to the advertised sale of this treasure trove, which would actually not take place until March 13th, one finds a critical note published in *The Friend of India*, one of the oldest newspapers printed in India:

> The valuable Oriental manuscripts purchased by the Government of India after the fall of Delhi, described as consisting of rare works in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, on various subjects, are to be publicly sold by Messrs Mackenzie, Lyall and Co. at the Madrissa College, Calcutta on Wednesday. Why not keep them for the new Museum? This sale looks like Vandalism.[116]

This brief snippet is striking for several reasons. First, we see that there was criticism of how the colonial government handled these manuscripts dating back to the mid-19th century. Thus, this type of skepticism is not in any way a product of post-colonial studies and other intellectual projects that have developed in the last forty to fifty years as means of critiquing colonial regimes. The use of the term "Vandalism" tells is illustrative here. Second, this text is actually preserved within the British Library's holdings *in the form of a copy*. To be precise, it is a copy that someone typed up at an unknown time in the past. We see here a case in which the text in its original form testified to criticism of the government's handling of things, while the act of producing a copy itself speaks of an individual who perhaps wanted to document that criticism and preserve it for the historical record.

Lastly, there several references to what the *Times of India* piece mentions as "the new Museum," which supposedly could have been a good home for the manuscripts. Our much-burdened colonial official, Major Lees, also references this museum in one of his letters regarding the Delhi Collection; in his case it is one of the reasons that he was not responsible for

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35. Office Memorandum, to the Publiher of the <u>Gazette of India</u>, No. 1139, dated the 4th February 1867. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 25?, British Library, London.

[116] Extract from "The Friend of India," 14 March 1867, p. 303. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 29, British Library, London.

any damages incurred, for he "was under the impression that the Trustees of the new Museum would long since have been appointed, who would relieve [him]…"[117] Next, Lees writes that there are "about 3,000 manuscripts remaining, and it was proposed to make them over to the Trustees of the Indian Museum; but nothing is known of that Institution to this Office."[118] The records to not indicate any information regarding the volumes that were sold, 1,120 volumes of manuscripts in all. Lees does document the proceeds from the sale, listing the income as Rupees 1,076, 14,3. Less deductions for advertisements, coolies [presumable to assist with the sale?], and then the commission of 8 percent to Messrs Mackenzie, Lyall and Company subtotaling Rupees 207, 13,3; the net proceeds were Rupees 869,1. The next reference indicates that the British government approves retaining the Assistant Librarian and his dufteries (clerks), "until they [i.e., the manuscripts] are made over to the Trustees of the Imperial Museum on the completion of the Museum building."[119]

Of course, the after effects of colonization often include the removal of cultural heritage items from the lands that have been colonized. The removal of these items – whether small or large – is often justified on the grounds that the people in places like India lack the means to preserve and protect such majestic works of art and architecture. In his work on material culture and exchange between Hindus and Muslims in the era before the Delhi Sultanate, Flood

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[117] Prof. of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 1. Pp. 784-54. "Resolution." No. 118. From Major W.N. Lees…to E.C. Bayley…No. 71, dated the 10th March 1866. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 21, British Library, London.

[118] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 6. Pp. 2696-9. "Sale of the Delhi Manuscripts." No. 77. Memorandum, to the Examiner of Claims, No. 91, dated the 21st May 1867. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/ff. 30-31, British Library, London.

[119] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 6. Pp. 2696-9. "Sale of the Delhi Manuscripts." No. 79a. Statement showing the result of the sale of the Delhi Manuscripts sold by Public Auction by Messrs Mackenzie, Lyall and Company, on the 13th March 1867. This letter also includes Lees' complaint that the auctioneers were charging too much for their commission, given that they did almost nothing to help advertise the sale. Also, No. 80. From A.H. Harrington…to Major W.N. Lees…No. 2225, dated Simla, the 13th July 1867. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/ff. 30-31, British Library, London.

discusses multiple examples demonstrating that "looting" was an accepted practice through the region in which part of a victorious campaign would be removing highly valuable objects in order to use them either literally to boost the treasury, or more symbolically to boost the victor's sense of prestige and dominance over their conquered foe. While the evidence outlined above provides us with an example of another "victorious campaign" in South Asia, it would be a mistake to assume that the British are engaging in the same set of practices with the same set of motivations.

All of this gives raise to the question: what are the different issues at stake in the British government wanting to obtain the "Delhi (Persian) collection"? From the correspondence in the British Library archives, it appears that there was some interest in selling the most valuable tomes in order to generate some profits, but then those same dividends are then re-invested in order to finance not only the acquisition of the manuscripts in the first place, but their careful cataloguing and preservation. When discussing thousands of volumes, this is not mean feat, and we need to think carefully regarding the motivation behind such a vast undertaking. I would argue that this is ultimately *not* about the financial value of the manuscripts, for it seems clear from the records that most—if not all—of the choicest selections were sold during the initial auction, or perhaps simply disappeared during the years over which the collection was kept in India before its transfer to London. What then justifies the expense? It must be that these manuscripts were seen to represent an aspect of Mughal – and by extension, Indian – identity that the British colonial government wanted to possess. One rationale would be that "Government" (and its agents, to be precise) wanted to own these texts in order to read them, translate some of them, and interpret them so as to inform the broader effort to control South Asia in order to serve British imperial interests. We have evidence from Peter Gottshalk's work,

Religion, Science and Empire, that British colonial officers took advantage of the *A'īn-i Akbarī* to understand how to best administer revenue collection in certain areas of India.[120] The Delhi collections (in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu) definitely contain a vast repository of knowledge, but the overwhelming volume of that knowledge meant that colonial officials could not possibly have expected to engage with the texts in a substantial way for the broader purposes of learning more about the Mughal dynasty's administrative techniques. Additionally, beyond a few of the scholars and more academically inclined officials, who precisely would have been interested in reading and interpreting all of the Qur'an commentaries and works on Sufism?[121]

With practical and pragmatic reasons deemed unlikely sources for the motivation to take these objects, I am left with the argument that the Delhi Persian (and related) collection(s) represented a type of booty. Possessing these books meant owning part of the Mughal dynasty's soul, and what better way to deny an enemy any chance to regain power than to take away part of their identity, even if manifested in a pile of manuscripts? Scholars working to understand the contours of political and religious identities in South Asia before the advent of British colonial rule can now access these documents with great ease precisely because they were "looted" from their original owners. And really, why would anyone be surprised that actions such as these take place, when it was commonplace as an action taken by victors in a conflict situation. As Flood notes, while looting practices differed, for example between the Ghaznavids in their plundering of temples and palaces in South Asia, and the British in their own operations of imperial expansion, both involved the removal of precious goods, albeit for different purposes. The *huma*

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[120] Peter Gottshalk, *Religion, Science, and Empire*, pp. 59-60.

[121] The British Library guide to the Delhi Persian collection lists a rough outline of the contents of the manuscripts, grouped in categories such as "principles of law" and "ethics." Of interest of this project is that *Miz al-Nafas* (BL Delhi Persian 796d) is from the section labeled "Logic and Dialectics," while *Risala dar dam zadan* (BL Delhi Persian 824) is from the section labeled "Medicine." For the full list, see http://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2014/07/a-newly-digitised-unpublished-catalogue-of-persian-manuscripts.html (last accessed August 29, 2017).

(eagle) that once adorned Tipu Sultan's throne canopy, after all, was removed from his palace at Saringapatam after his defeat and death at the hands of the British in 1799, and now resides at Windsor Castle, where it has been used to adorn British state banquets.[122] Removing cultural artifacts was by no means a military or political move that was alien to the British during their imperial period in India.

How did it all end up, we must ask. Heinrick (Henry) Ferdinand Blochman gets involved after the final sale is completed, proposing that the British government allocate funds to him in order to create a printed catalogue. He begins by flattering E.C. Bayley, writing that "I venture to express a hope that you, as the patron of antiquarian science, will direct the attention of the Government to the necessity of cataloguing the Arabic and Persian manuscripts which exist in the public and private libraries of India."[123] In the same letter, he cites the appointment of Sprenger to catalogue the collection in Lucknow as evidence of the "liberal tendencies" exhibited by the Governor General in the past. Remembering Arberry's description of the Delhi collection has wanting in quality, it is worth noting that Blochman felt quite differently. He writes that the British government has

> … acquired a truly splendid collection of (Delhi) Arabic and Persian manuscripts, which are now preserved at the Madrissa. They contain old and most valuable manuscripts, especially rare Arabic works; and to judge from a few glimpses I got of the list of the books, there is among them a very large number of manuscripts, which are not found in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.[124]

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[122] Finbar Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

[123] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 17. Pp. 2767-8. "Preparation of a Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts bought at Delhi by Major Lees, on account of Government and now deposited in the Calcutta Madrissa." Demi-Official, - From H. Blochmann, Esquire, Assistant Professor, Calcutta Madrissa, to E.C. Bayley, Esquire, Secretary to the Government of India, - dated the 23rd March 1869. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 33, British Library, London.

[124] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 17. Pp. 2767-8. "Preparation of a Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts bought at Delhi by Major Lees, on account of Government and now deposited in the Calcutta Madrissa." Demi-Official, - From H. Blochmann, Esquire, Assistant Professor, Calcutta Madrissa, to E.C. Bayley, Esquire, Secretary to the Government of India, - dated the 23rd March 1869. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 33, British Library, London.

Bayley responds approving Blochman's request, and asks that he prepare an initial report on the status of the manuscripts, including a specific request that Blochman comment as to "whether there is any reason to believe (a report has recently reached the Viceroy and Governor General) that any valuable manuscript has been either borrowed and not returned, or stolen from the collection."[125] In his appraisal of the collections, he comments that none of the manuscripts bear a government seal:

> The books, since their arrival in 1859, have never been stamped as the property of the Government. As the manuscripts are at present, they bear the signatures of Karimullah Vaiz, who is said to live at present at Delhi; of Mufti Codruddin, who died at Delhi a short time ago; and of Fazl-i Flag, who lately died in the Andamans.[126]

Blochmann's mention of these three individuals is one of the only indications we have as to who possessed these manuscripts before they show up for auction by the Prize Agents in the aftermath of the 1857 rebellion. The Government responds quickly asking him to take steps to protect the manuscripts as best as is possible, both in terms of preventing any additional theft, as well as taking advantage of the already existing staff at the Madrissa to prepare a full and accurate catalogue. Most importantly, the Under Secretary to the Government of India, J. Geoghegan, writes that "I am directed to request that you will have a stamp prepared [bearing the words "Government of India"] in order that the manuscripts may be stamped as the property of Government."[127] Whether Blochmann or someone else carried out this duty, all of the Delhi

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[125] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 17. Pp. 2767-8. "Preparation of a Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts bought at Delhi by Major Lees, on account of Government and now deposited in the Calcutta Madrissa." No., 135. From E.C. Bayley, Esquire..to H. Blochman, Esquire…No. 2013, dated Simla, the 30th April 1869. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 34, British Library, London.

[126] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 18. Pp. 4867-8. "Report regarding the Delhi, Arabic and Persian Manuscripts preserved in the Calcutta Madrissa." No. 27. From H. Blochmann…to E.C. Bayley…Dated the 16th July 1869. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 36, British Library, London.

[127] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: ccccxxxiv, 18. Pp. 4867-8. "Report regarding the Delhi, Arabic and Persian Manuscripts preserved in the Calcutta Madrissa." No. 28. From J. Geoghegan, Esquire, Under Secretary to the Government of India, to H. Blochmann…No. 3673, dated Simla, the 7th August 1869. Reproduced in *Eur*

collection is now marked with a stamp per the instructions in Geoghegan's missive as outlined above.

The next step was to determine whether or not the manuscripts would be transferred from the Madrissa to the newly built Indian Museum. Special notice should be paid to Johnson's tone in describing the collection, "that the Delhi manuscripts *which were rescued from destruction at the taking of that city* in 1858 should be transferred to the Indian Museum to form the basis of its Oriental Library."[128] If there is one phrase that aptly sums up the British view towards these manuscripts, and so many others like them that the eventually acquired from across the entire empire, it is last sentiment in which they cast themselves in the role of benevolent rescuers, saving the cultural legacy of their various subject peoples, who obviously cannot be trusted with the task themselves. For why else was it so imperative for the British to effect their colonial enterprise in the first place, were it not for what the French would term *la mission civilisatrice*?

Ultimately, as we know, the British government in India decided *not* to deposit the Delhi collection with the Indian Museum in Calcutta, and instead sent them to the India Office Library, which in turn sent them on to London where they now reside within the massive holdings of the British Library. The trustees of the museum felt that, since there was no one on staff with knowledge of Arabic, Persian, or Sanskrit, and even fewer staff held knowledge of manuscript preservation, that the India Office would be a better home. Arthur Howell, staff member with the Secretary to the Government of India, writes in October 1876 that "the Manuscripts may be very carefully packed in tin-lined cases and sent with a sufficient number of catalogues to the Home

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B186/Delhi MSS/folio 37, British Library, London.

[128] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: 998, pp. 815-6. "Transmission of the Delhi Manuscripts to the Secretary of State in view to their being deposited in the Library attached to the India Office." No. 96C, dated Fort William, the 15th August 1876. From – Colonel A. Johnson, Offg. Secretary to the Government of India, Military Dept., in charge of the Home Dept. To – The Honorary Secretary to the Trustees, Indian Museum. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 38, British Library, London. Emphasis added.

Office at Calcutta for transmission to England."[129] From bullock train in beer cases to "very carefully packed in tin-lined cases," one sees how these manuscripts gained value over the years.

The final piece of official correspondence in the British Library archives on the Delhi Collection contain a summary, written in November 1876, of the manuscripts and their story: "After the re-occupation of Delhi subsequent to the mutiny the Government of India purchased some ancient and valuable manuscripts which had come into the possession of the Delhi Prize Agents."[130] The rest of the letter summarizes the texts and their journey, from Delhi to Calcutta, from the Madrissa to the Museum, only to re-directed to the India Office. We can add the term "re-occupied" to the list provided above cataloguing the various turns of phrase used by British imperial agents to describe both the manuscripts and the city of Delhi following the 1857 rebellion.

Sub-section 2.4: Concluding Remarks on the *Miz al-Nafas* and the Delhi Persian Collection

In the previous two chapters I outlined a group of texts that I argue form a class that I (repeatedly) refer to as "the *'ilm-i dam* corpus." I stated that the *Kāmarū Pančāšikā* would stand as a baseline against which all other entries would be measured. This is due to the presumption that the *Kāmarū Pančāšikā* is the earliest and longest rendition of this material in Persian, and that subsequent Persian (as well as Arabic and Urdu translations) would be based upon the *Kāmarū Pančāšikā* in some way.

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[129] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: 998, pp. 815-6. "Transmission of the Delhi Manuscripts to the Secretary of State in view to their being deposited in the Library attached to the India Office." No. 1729, dated Simla, the 30th October 1876. From – Arthur Howell, Esq. Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of India. To – The Secretary to the Board of Examiners. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/folio 39. British Library, London.

[130] Proc. Of the G. of I. Home Department: 998, pp. 815-6. "Transmission of the Delhi Manuscripts to the Secretary of State in view to their being deposited in the Library attached to the India Office." No. 69, dated Sila, the 2nd November 1876. From -The Government of India. To – Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India. Reproduced in *Eur B186*/Delhi MSS/ff. 39-40. British Library, London.

In contrast to the full *Kāmarū Pančāšikā*, both the Browne and Āmulī recensions are much shorter and do not contain many of the explicit references to Hindu or Muslim practices that we would recognize using today's categories. There are no mantras, no mention of a mosque at all, no hadith narratives or mention of the Prophet Muhammad, and no Qur'anic references. While the *Kāmarū Pančāšikā* includes attempted transliterations from Sanskrit into Persian, the Browne recension features only one remotely comparable case, that of the *mahā bhūta* mentioned above – and even here, the transliteration is done with comfort and ease by the copyist. The only mention of God is in the opening invocation, "He is God, the Besought" [*huwa allah al-mustaghāth*]. That 'the Besought' is one of God's ninety-nine names is significant as it helps situate the text and makes an overt link to Muslim communities, but the lack of other "Islamicate" references is equally significant.

There are some important comparisons to be made between the Browne recension and the Arabic translation of the *Amritakunda*. It includes the five elements of the breath (chap. 2, para 2, excluding reference to *māhā bhuta*), problems of the breath (chap. 7, para. 10), using *mandala*s (chap. 9 –it must be noted that where the Browne recension prescribes the use of *mandala*s for enticing someone to notice and perhaps fall in love with you, in the Arabic version of the *Amritakunda*, one uses *mandala*s to summon goddesses), and predicting one's death (chap. 8 – note this is far more detailed than the treatment we find in the Browne recension).

Flood cautions us against obscuring what was at times a contentious negotiation of power and influence between various communities in South Asia, and in particular the sorts of retroactive chauvinism that limits the subjectivity and agency of the individuals within those communities. "In one case the premodern subject is a permanent prisoner of his or her 'Hindu' or 'Muslim' identity; in the other, bludgeoned into a perpetual performance of harmonious

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hybridity."[131] Thus there must be another space where that we can imagine where artifacts that

refuse categorization – such as the Browne recension – can exist. This will perhaps result in a

jettisoning of terms like "Islamicate" or "Sanskritic," but it may also result in redefining the

goals of scholarship on Islam and Hinduism, Iran and India, and all the places and spaces

between.

This chapter lays out evidence for how different groups, particularly Persianate Muslims

and European orientalists, engaged with three different examples of *'ilm-i dam*. The Von Kremer

text in particular stands out as an example of how a European scholar of Islamic civilization

struggled to fit Sufism – especially the Indian varieties – within his preconstructed notions of

what authentic mystical practice looks like in Islam.

Another part to this story is the relative silence found within British orientalists and

officials working within the colonial apparatus in South Asia when it comes to dealing with

esotericism. Examining these silences, we must ask what it means that these Orientalists, such as

Horace Heyman Wilson, did not discuss this type of material in their published work or personal

written correspondence, despite living in India for decades. Wilson (d. 1860) held a variety of

positions in India, ranging from surgeon to metallurgist at a mint, to superintendent of the

Sanskrit College in Calcutta. He was the first person to hold the Boden Chair of Sanskrit at

Oxford, a feat that required him to defend his religious credentials from rumors that he had

become an apostate during his time in India.[132] These accusations were probably brought on by

his opposition to switching the language of instruction in India exclusively to English, a position

well-documented in his correspondence through numerous letters from associates in India

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[131] Flood, 266.

[132] We can infer this because the records of Wilson's correspondence include several pages of newspaper clippings printing letters to the editor penned by those who supported Wilson's candidacy for the Boden Chair of Sanskrit at Oxford. See "Horace Heyman Wilson papers," British Library, London, EUR 301E/2, ff. 20a and 20b.

testifying to on-going efforts by those who favored the "Anglicist" position. I bring him up because his voluminous writing on Indian epic literature, theater and drama, as well as publishing a highly valued Sanskrit-English dictionary, all mark him as an illustrative example of what it meant to be an orientalist in the first-half of the nineteenth century. And yet he does not appear to have written about anything remotely approaching the *siva-svarodaya* tradition.

Perhaps he and his contemporaries, such as Sir William Jones and other members of the Royal Asiatick Society, were more interested in establishing a baseline of "classical Hinduism," and accordingly they applied their attentions to producing edited texts of the Vedas and Puranas. Perhaps things like *siva-svarodaya* were too esoteric even for them.

What connections are there between this silence and the way that the British ruled India, especially from the mid-19th century onwards, in terms of administering Hindu and Muslim communities with different court systems? If we have a text (or two!) that begin with the *basmala*, but then these are labeled with the word Hinduism in the official catalog, then what does that say about the type of court that a practitioner of *'ilm-i dam* would go? I am not claiming that practitioners of *'ilm-i dam* constituted a distinct religious sect or movement, but the clashing of sectarian categories raises some fundamental questions about how a regime of power-such as the British Raj-would decide to which regime of knowledge they would take recourse in resolving disputes involving people who do not fit so neatly into these categories. Where would Von Kremer send his Hindu-influenced Sufis for legal rulings if they are not seen as "real" Muslims?

Orientalists and other colonial-era operatives had a vested interest in segregating out different religious communities from one another. This separation worked to construct and re-inscribe a sense of difference between Hindus and Muslims that functioned quite differently than

previous systems of government in South Asia. A corollary to the physical and political separation of groups is to distinguish between them in intellectual means as well, therefore orientalists—at least from the colonial era—struggled to conceive of "Hindu knowledge" overlapping with "Muslim knowledge." As we will see in Chapter Three, the Mughals did not have the same relationship to difference, and they were not as obsessed with keeping lines between groups impermeable. A key link here is that between Sufism on the one hand, and "Indian esotericism" on the other.

"Modernity" as a process has served to simplify that which was complex, simultaneously making the task falling today's scholars that much easier and harder. Easier, because the first few steps in the deconstructive process are quite straightforward. Harder, because the after-effects of modernity entail an infection of structures and 'ways of knowing' with incredibly limited worldviews. One such worldview is manifest in the description of *Miz al-Nafas* as "Hinduism." As I have attempted to demonstrate, classifying a manuscript (and by natural extension, the knowledge and/or practices contains in its text) as belonging to one religious tradition or group of practitioners, and *not* others, means that we miss an opportunity to see beyond religious labels altogether and try to grasp a sense of how people who lived centuries in the past may have related to the same set of labels and signifiers that we use today. The key difference is that the symbol, the sign behind the signifier, is different today than it was in seventeenth-century Delhi, or nineteenth-century Khuy.

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