

HISTORY AND CULTURE OF LUCKNOW: A BRIEF STUDY OF SHIA CULTURE AND HERITAGE DURING THE LAST PHASE OF ORIENTAL CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The Indo-Mughal civilization, like all civilizations, was formed on a potent collection of ideas linked to a certain social situation. These ideals, which were mirrored in institutions, rites, rituals, and language, revealed a decidedly class-based society that, despite being unrepresentative and élitist, was yet unified and harmonious. However, such a culture could not persist indefinitely. New forces developed, old conceptions were challenged, and the established order's framework was undermined. The current study concentrates on this period of Indo-Muslim civilization, when it was at its apex, which was also its penultimate phase, when its centre was shifted from Delhi to Lucknow. The present research thus aims to highlight the great cultural elements of the Nawabi era. The paper concentrates on several unique aspects which were the core of everyday lives of the inhabitants of Lucknow. The work can be seen as contributing the knowledge on the Lucknowi culture with some of its qualities.

Keywords: Lucknow, Culture, Nawabs

Introduction

Following the disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the sixteenth century in Delhi during the reign of Akbar, the culture and pattern of life that had developed during the magnificent era of the Mughals began to spread across Avadh (Oudh), as certain leading figures left Delhi and eventually found a new home in Lucknow, where the independent court of Avadh was established in 1753.

Pahle –Aap ‘after you’ was a phrase of welcome in old Lucknow and especially imbued with the mannerism of Lucknow’s past usually associated with the Nawabs. Arabic Nawab, plural of Naib: ‘Deputy’, but used honorifically as a title. Under the Mughal government the title of Nawab was prefixed to the name of a high official and the Viceroy or Governor of a Province. At the time of disintegration of the Mughal Empire, some of the Nawabs became independent

rulers, hence the word came to a common title for a Muslim sovereign in India. The title was retained by the British Government of India who would confer it upon a Muslim of a high rank or a dignitary without any office being attached to it. In 1947, the Republic of India, abolished the creation of new Nawabs of Avadh had the title prefixed to the names of all the members of the family including the women. This practice continued among the Muslim aristocracy in Lucknow, even after the demise of the ruling dynasty. It actually survived, however, as long as the feudal system survived in Uttar Pradesh- that is until the British left India in 1947 (Sharar,1975).

Since then, cultural evolution has reshaped the physical, social, and cultural landscape of the people of Lucknow, particularly the Nawab families, whose forefathers were considered the wealthiest and endowed with mannerism and delicacy.

Brief History of the Lucknow

When it comes to Lucknow's history, no one knows for sure when it first became populated or how it received its name, but based on family tales and conjectures, the following explanation can be presented. Raja Ramchandra is reported to have given this area as a prize to his faithful brother Lachman [Lakshman], who had followed him on his adventures, after he had conquered Ceylon and completed his year of exile in the woods, and after he had embraced the status of monarchy by adopting its form.

To commemorate the latter's stay, a village was created on a high hill overlooking the river which from that day has been known as Lachmanpur. The hill was called Lachman Hill and in it was a very deep cave with a well of which no one could estimate the depth.

It is also believed that Maharaja Yudhistir's" grandson, Raja Jaman Ji," offered this territory as a reward to holy sages, the rishiss and munis, and that they set up their hermitages throughout the land and got engrossed in the contemplation of the Almighty. After some time, understanding that these sages had become weak and helpless, two heretofore unknown tribes emerged from the Himalayan foothills and took possession of the territory. These tribes seem to have been two branches of the same family-one was called Bhar and the other Pansi.

These people were attacked by Saiyyid Salar Masud Ghazi in 1030 and most probably also by Bakhtiyar Khilji in 1202. Therefore the first Muslim families to settle in this region were those that had accompanied these two invaders, notably the former (Gokhale,1959)

Later on, after the breakdown of the Moghul Empire, which followed close upon the accession of the Emperor Muhammad Shah in 1719, brought a number of adventurers .

Among these Muhammad Armin Sa'dat Khan from Persia and a Shia by sect was appointed Subedar of Oudh in 1724. He was the progenitor of the line of Nawab-Wazirs who ruled as independent governors and latterly as Kings of Oudh until 1856. His descendants were, Safdar Jang (1739-53). (1739-53). Shuja'ud-daula (1753-75) , and Asafu-d-daula (1775-96) . Asafu-d-daula transferred his capital from Faizabad to Lucknow, possibly to escape from the tutelage of his dominating mother. It may be recalled that during the reign of these wazirs, East India Company was progressively consolidating its influence in Oudh. In 1775 Asafu-d-daula agreed that a permanent British Resident might be appointed to the Oudh Court and that the Nawab would pay for the main-tenant of the Company's troops. The Company was progressively strengthening its control on other parts of Oudh, and at the insistence of Sir John Shore, a brother of Asafu-d-daula, Sa'dat All Khan (1797-1814) was even declared Nawab Wazir (Imperial Gazetteer of India,1908)

In return for the relinquished areas the company, whose jurisdiction now completely surrounded that of the Nawab, pledged to maintain the defence of Oudh with its own men. It will be unnecessary to follow in full the ceaseless talks and intrigues which fill the chronicles of Oudh for the next fifty years. After the death of Saadat Ali Khan in July 1814, his second son Ghaziuddin Haider ruled. In 1818 the Marquis of Hastings recommended to the Nawab that he should proclaim his complete independence of Moghal suzerainty by claiming the title of King. This he did in the next year. Ghazi ud din died in October 1827 and was succeeded by his son Nasiruddin Haider. He was possibly poisoned and died on July 7th, 1837 and a brother of Nasir ud Daula was placed on the throne. A fresh treaty was put up through which the British Government had power to intercede in case of 'anarchy and misrule' and the new king took the title of Muhammad Ali Shah. He endeavored to revive the amani system of revenue (as against the unpopular Ijarah system) and when he died in 1842 the kingdom had been restored to some amount of prosperity. During the rule of his son, Amjad Ali (1842--47) all the old injustices resurfaced. His favorite Imdad Husain (Amin-ud Daula) was named minister and the government of the country became entirely 'palsied'(Majumdar,1948).

Under the last king of Oudh, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah (1817-56) there was little development. And in spite of his early endeavor to reform, the corruption of the court had now increased to a large amount. Singers and dancers intervened in matters of State and practically held the keys of administration. In 1854 Col. Outram held an investigation into all branches of the administration. This led Dalhousie in 1856 to propose a fresh treaty to the King, by the provisions of which he was permitted to maintain his title, but his sovereign privileges were to be restricted to particular specified territories. "The administration of the province was to be vested 'for life' in the company. Wajid Ali Shah, rather than ratify such a pact, decided to surrender his crown and went for Calcutta. General Outram thereafter gained responsibility of the government of the

country. Wajid Ali Shah's mother, Janab Aliya Begum, with the King's brother and his eldest son travelled from Calcutta to petition Queen Victoria for his reinstatement and were still there when the revolt of May 1857 broke out. The important events of the year which followed are well-known. In 1858, the city of Lucknow had been freed of the "rebels". The history of the city since then has been a chronicle of gradual improvement and transformation (Moreland et al.,1956)

The Cultural Life of The City Lucknow

From the last part of the eighteenth century until the collapse of the Lucknow monarchy in 1856, Lucknow's high culture was in full bloom. It did, however, last as long as the feudal system did in Uttar Pradesh—that is, until the British departed India in 1947. This was a lovely and graceful existence in Lucknow, devoid of worldly cares and anxieties, a life of affluence, devoted to luxuries and leisure activities. The nobility, like the affluent middle classes who were related to the nobility at various degrees, had vast riches and spent lavishly as a result of the feudal system. According to some documented records, even peasants lived in relative comfort, with those who struggled to make a living only needing to look for a patron. They were valued for their abilities, rather than being employed, as they would be in a modern industrial culture. Many Urdu literary works have been written about living during this time period. For example, Rajab Ali Beg Surur (1786-186T),³³⁷ depicts contemporary life in Lucknow, which Askari compares to Tennyson's enchanted city picture (Askari,1929).

The Development Urdu Poetry and Story telling

The fall of the Delhi Empire coincided with the formation of the kingdom of Oudh. Men of letters and artists who were denied patronage by the Delhi Court came to Lucknow, where they were welcomed by Asaf ud Daula's generosity. 'The generous support of the court spread to all disciplines of learning, and made Lucknow a great focus of art and cultural activity in India,' said one of the greatest poets and artists who migrated from Delhi to the court of Asafuddaula.

The Masnavi was the true beginning of Persian poetry, and this kind of poetry has long been regarded as the most essential and powerful. Firdausi's martial masnavi Shah Nameh pioneered the way, and Nizami, Maulana Rum, Khusrau, Jami, Hatifi, and others rose to prominence in this subject.

When Mir Taqi Mir was in Delhi and Lucknow, he penned several short masnavis, but they are so truncated and conventional that they don't seem to belong in the category of masnavis.

Mir Ghulam Hasan Hasan, son of Mir Zahik, was the first poet to write masnavis in Urdu. He arrived to Lucknow as a kid with his illustrious father. He grew up in Lucknow as a member of

the community, where he was nourished and where his poems blossomed. His masnavi was affected by the milieu in which he lived. Benazir-0-Badar-e-Munir was a true Lucknow native. Mirza Muhammad Taqi Khan Havas wrote his masnavi Laila Majnun at the time, and the popularity of masnavis grew in Lucknow. There was a decline of interest throughout the time of Atish and Nasikh, till Pandit Daya. Gulzar-e-Nasim was written by Shankar Nasim, Tilism-e-Ulfat was written by Afatb ud Daula Qalaq and Navab Mirza Shauq. Fareb-e-Ishq, Bahar-e-Ishq, and Zahre-e-Ishq Their verses became so well-known and well-known that everyone knew them. In response to Mir, one author wrote the masnavi Lazat-e-Ishq at a previous time (Azhar,1971).

Masnavi of Hasan. This is commonly attributed to Navab Mirza Shauq because it was released with his masnavis. But it isn't his, and it isn't from his time period.

The elegy marsiya is an important early type of poetry. The recitation of elegies and rajaz, 308 combat hymns, was the means of exhibiting brilliance in verse and eloquence in ancient Arab poetry. Elegies were rarely recited in Persian until the Safavi dynasty, when the Shia sect gained dominance in Persia. Poets then devoted their focus to the production of elegies in order to resurrect the memories of the disasters that befell the Prophet's household. Maulana Muhtashim Kashi wrote a memorable marsiya with only a few verses that became well known.

Following this, poets would occasionally produce a marsiya to mourn the death of Imam Husain, but marsiyas were so undervalued in the poetry world that there was a phrase that "a down-at-heel poet resorted to producing marsiyas." However, poets began to compose marsiyas and laments as the Shia kingdom of Avadh grew. When the Shia kingdom of Avadh took over as the theological successor to the dead Safavi empire, mourning assemblies in Lucknow gained a lot of momentum (Qadri,1966)

Goi Dastan

The topic that deserves the most attention is dastan go, or story-telling, which is the designation for extemporaneous authoring. This art form began in Arabia, where tale-telling gatherings were conducted during pagan times. We don't know if Indian tale retellings are related to Arabian tale retellings.

The "Tale of Amir Hamza³⁴," which is the foundation for all raconteurs, was written in Persian. It is supposed to have been written during the Tughlaq era by Amir Khusrau, a skilled musician.

Famous raconteurs from Delhi arrived to Lucknow, where opium addicts admired their work so much that listening to stories became an integral part of their gatherings. In a short time, the practice had gained such traction in Lucknow that no wealthy individual could be seen without a

storyteller in his retinue. Hundreds of them appeared on the scene shortly after. There are still one or two left (Irwin,1880)

They are two well-known raconteurs in Delhi, but their name also well-known in Lucknow.

Pigeon Flying and Cockfighting

In Lucknow, both the rich and the poor could participate in birdfighting. Cocks, bush quails, lals, pigeons, and parrots were among the birds utilized in Lucknow for battle. The claws of the cock were tied in Lucknow so that they couldn't do much damage, and their beaks were scraped with penknives and made sharp and pointed. The two cocks were unleashed into the cock-pit with their owners standing behind them, each striving to get his own cock to strike first. When the cocks began to battle with their beaks and claws, their owners encouraged and invigorated the birds.

Both parties agreed to withdraw their birds after they had been fighting for a while and were wounded and exhausted. In cockfighting slang, this procedure was known as pani [literally, water]. The owners would clean the wounds on the cocks' heads with a cloth and water. They would sometimes lick the wounds with their lips and make additional attempts, restoring the cocks to their previous vigour in a matter of minutes before releasing them back into the cock-pit. The bouts might last four to five days, perhaps even eight or nine days, if the pani method was used. When a cock was blinded or severely injured to the point of being unable to stand and fight, it was assumed that he had lost (Haidar,1907).

Flying Pigeon

Pigeons are among the docile animals that have piqued the interest of humans all throughout the world, from ancient times to the present. There are a few different kinds. Girah baz and goley are two fliers that were saved solely for their beauty and colorful colors. Shirazi, guli, peshawari, gulvey, laqa, lotan, choya or chandans, and a few more are the most well-known types.

The first variety to be flown was this one. Following them came the goley, a type developed in Arabia, Persia, and Turkestan. If released early in the morning, the tumbler pigeon will soar for several hours (Sleeman,1858).

Kite flying

Kite-flying is still a popular pastime in India, and most boys and teenagers like it. Given this, one would assume that it has been present in India for a long time.

Guddi, a paper kite shaped like an upright diamond and easier to manufacture than a tukkal, was conceived under the reign of Amjad Ali Shah. There were two bows and one back-stick in a tukkal. There was just one bow and one back-stick in a guddi.

Kites with one and a half bows and a back-stick were popular during Wajid Ali Shah's period. They were shaped like modern kites, except they had a little paper tassel at the bottom, similar to the tukkal. Then Muhammad Husain Khan of Salar Jang's family, Agha Abu Tarab Khan, and a few other noblemen created a kite with a patta, or triangle, made out of paper at the bottom instead of a tasse. This is still in use today, and it looks to have stuck around. Kites with pattas, known as kankava, or tassels, known as dehr kana, are now flown all across India. Lucknow is where they were created. When battling with these kites, a string was used in the same way that tukkals were. Significant kites carrying a large length of cord were created ((Sleeman,1858).

Everyday Speech

Culture and decent manners necessitate that vulgar language be avoided in speech. Words and opinions that may be offensive to others should be avoided. If it is necessary to bring up an unpleasant subject, it should be couched in such a way that the feelings of the person addressed are not wounded, and phrased as gently and politely as possible. This technique was perfected by the educated people of Lucknow.

Janab, 'Sir, Janab-e-Vala, 'Honourable Sir, Janab-e-Ali, 'Exalted Sir, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Hazrat, Ha "Huzur,Your Highness', Huzur-e-Vala, 'High Sir, Huzur-e-Ali, 'Exalted Highness', Sarkar, Master, Qibla, 'Exalted Sir,' and Qibla-o-Kaba, 'Your Holiness 3' These phrases, as well as a few others, are used to address a notable person based on his status. The residents of Lucknow, more than anybody else, assert that no other language in the world contains as many honorific words of salutation. In India, Urdu is no longer regarded as the example of a refined language, and other literatures, devoid of Urdu influence, have begun to take precedence. Bengali, Panjabi, Gujrati, Sindhi, Marathi, Cantari, and Telgu all claim literary merit and eloquence, but I dare all languages, including Persian, Arabic, English, and French, to generate as many forms of address as Urdu does.

Arts and Crafts

Both Hindus and Muslims contributed significant contributions to Lucknow's dances, music, painting, and sculpture. Lucknow's distinct musical and dancing forms are well-known throughout the country.

Dance, a uniquely Hindu art form, was adopted, developed, and patronized by Muslims. Wajid Ali Shah, a great lover of the arts and music and possibly a brilliant dancer, created several new compositions. The dance motifs popularized by the kathak style are all based on the Krishna narrative.

The two brothers Kalka and Brinda Din are considered the progenitors and finest exponents of the Kathak form. Achhan Maharaj, the family's eldest descendent, is no longer alive, but Shambhoo Maharaj is keeping the family's traditions alive. Wajid Ali Shah's court had amassed a slew of musicians, the majority of whom were Khayalias, Sarangias, Sitarias, and Tabalas. Sadiq Ali Khan, his court's greatest vocalist, remained in Lucknow after Wajid Ali Shah was exiled to Calcutta.

Sadiq Ali established a new Khayal tradition. Lucknow, on the other hand, is known for its Thumris. It has beautifully integrated several melodies and at least two art forms, poetry and dance, as a romantic protest against the aridity of the classical modes. Its ability to express itself is crucial. Thumri in Lucknow is known for the Bliava, which is transmitted through voice inflections, eye, neck, arm, and finger motions. Ghulam Nabi, the creator of Tappa and Thumri, is also said to have lived in Lucknow. Thumri composers such as Wajid Ali Shah, Radar Piya, and Brinda Din have added to the splendor of Lucknow's music. The late Abid Husain was the best example of a specific type of tabla playing. Soz, Marsia, and Qawavalli from Lucknow are also well-known in India. Manju Khan of Lucknow was the finest sozkar of modern times. As a result, the Marris College of Hindustani Music (now Bhatkhande University), the largest university of music in northern India, was founded here twenty-five years ago, and it is currently celebrating its silver anniversary. It was founded by Pandit'-islinu Narain Bliatkhande, Raja Nawab Ali, and Rai Rajeshwar Bali, all of whom were inspirational (Rizvi,1957).

Foods

Tora was the collective name for the foods chosen for feasts at home or sent out. Pulau; muzafar, a sweet, rich rice dish with saffron; mutanjan, meat, sugar, and rice with spices; shir mal; safaida, a simple, sweet rice meal; fried aubergine; shir baranj, a rich, sweet rice dish boiled in milk; qaurma; arvi, a fried vegetable with meat; shami kababs, meat and lentil croquettes

Most of these delicacies were found at the tora in most areas, but in Lucknow, all of these dishes were consumed at home or served to guests.

Other types of meals were infrequently served. These meals were placed in front of each guest on the dastar khwan. The dishes were carefully taken away on enormous octagonal wooden trays if they had to be sent out.

Sweets

The Hindu *halvai* [confectioner] is responsible for the public's familiar sweets, although Muslim chefs have a much higher standard. These chefs are unable to meet the wants of the public, and it is the Hindu confectioner's business to do so. Only a few handful are interested in refined delicacies, therefore the cooks produce candy for them. Their products are unrivaled in quality and taste. In Lucknow, there are two types of confectionery: Muslim and Hindu confectionery. If you buy a sweet in a regular Muslim shop, it will be no better than what Hindus make, but if you request a specialty ahead of time, it will be infinitely better. In general, jalebis, spiral-shaped sweets glazed with syrup, imertis, thick syrupy sweets, and balu shahis, moist, round syrupy sweets, were all well-made in Lucknow.

Greetings in Various Forms

Salutation and greeting are the next fundamental aspects of social etiquette. As Salam Alaik is an old, pious, and simple Islamic salutation "To various persons, I said, "Peace be upon thee," or "Salam Alaikum, Peace be upon you." In the morning, the Arabs say Subhakum Allah Bilkhair, which means "May God make the morning favourable to you." In the evening, they say Masakum Alah Bilkhair, which means "May God make the evening favourable to you." The Arabs extended these greetings as far west as Andalusia and as far east as India (Tayler,1842).

Conclusion

It was at the court of Lucknow, above all others, that the late Mughal civilization achieved the peak of its magnificence and refinement. The paper explains the culture and manner of life of the people of Lucknow throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The intricacies of some of the significant cultural features notably the concrete representations in everyday life are brought to the foreground. In effect all the essential cultural elements including religious, political and socioeconomic trends of the city Lucknow are thoroughly documented. This life of Lucknow was sweet and graceful, free from worldly cares and anxieties, a life of prosperity, devoted to luxuries and leisured pursuits. The nobles held tremendous riches through the feudal system and spent lavishly; so too did the affluent middle classes who were connected with the nobility at various levels.

The article covers a history of the court of Avadh and of the evolution of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Lucknow's culture and social structures, and a detailed account of the habits, pastimes, creative achievements and religious beliefs of its inhabitants. The real anatomy of the social and creative life of Lucknow throughout the period, embracing a variety of features like popular language and the art of story-telling; such diversions as kite- and pigeon-flying reveals a multifaceted cultural evolution.

Thus the civilization established in Lucknow crumbled almost fully as soon as the British left India in 1947. The partition of the country into the two separate States of India and Pakistan, the abolition of the Zamindari system, the adoption of Hindi as the State language in U.P., renamed Uttar Pradesh, and a business-like attitude brought about by the beginnings of the new technological civilization-all this caused sudden and violent change in the established order. The younger generation formed a new viewpoint motivated by the necessity to survive. A considerable number emigrated to Pakistan, particularly to Karachi and its vicinity, and established a new life.

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