

Muntakhab-al Lubab by Kafi Khan

Muhammad Hashim (c. 1664-1732), better known by his title Khafi Khan, was a civil servant and historian of Mughal India. He is notable for authoring *Muntakhab-al Lubab*, a Persian language book about the history of India.

Muhammad Hashim was given the title Khafi Khan (or Khwafi Khan) by emperor Muhammad Shah, because his ancestors came from Khaf (or Khwaf) in present-day Iran. The exact date and place of his birth are unknown, but he was most probably born in India. The *Muntakhab-al Lubab* states that he had completed 52 years since reaching "the age of discretion" when 74 years had passed after the death of Shah Jahan's minister Sa'd Allah (Hijri year 1066). Assuming the contemporary "age of discretion" as 14 years, this implies that Khafi Khan was born around 1664.

Khafi Khan's father Khwaja Mir was also a historian, and held a high position under the Mughal prince Murad. Khafi Khan probably started his career as a merchant or an official clerk, and visited Bombay in 1693–1694, where he had an interview with an English official.[1] Khwaja Mir was severely wounded at the Battle of Samugarh, in which Murad was defeated by his brother Aurangzeb. Later, Khwaja Mir served Aurangzeb, and his son Khafi Khan also held various civil and military assignments during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707).

Khafi Khan served Aurangzeb's successors, including Bahadur Shah, Farrukhsiyar, and Muhammad Shah. He lived in Deccan and Gujarat, spending a long time at Surat. He also lived at Ahmedabad, Rahuri, and Champaner (whose governorship he held during the reign of Bahadur Shah). His *Muntakhab-al Lubab* covers events up to the beginning of the 14th year of Muhammad Shah's reign, that is, 1732. He also wrote a book on the history of minor Muslim dynasties of India: this book was apparently an abridgment of Firishta's work, and only a small portion of it survives in form of a manuscript

Khafi Khan held the title Nizam al-Mulki, which suggests that during his last years, he served Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah I, a Mughal nobleman who established the Hyderabad State. He was a close friend of Shah Nawaz, another courtier of Asaf Jah I and the author of *Ma'asir al-umara*

Muntakhab-al Lubab (Arabic for "selected [records] of the wise and pure"[1]) is a Persian language book about the history of India. Completed around 1732, it was written by Khafi Khan in the Mughal Empire of present-day India. The title of the book is also transliterated as *Muntakhab ul-Lubab* or *Muntakhab-i-Lubab*; it is also known as *Tarikh-i Khafi Khan*.

The book is divided into three volumes:

1. Volume 1 deals covers local dynasties up to the Lodis
2. Volume 2 covers the Timurid dynasty and the Mughals up to Emperor Akbar, including the Sur interregnum
3. Volume 3 covers the Mughal period after the death of Akbar (1605)

The book covers events up to the beginning of the 14th year of Muhammad Shah's reign, that is, 1732. It covers the history of the Mughal dynasty in detail, including their ancestor Timur and his successors. It is an important source of information for the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.[3] Besides the Mughals, the book is an

important source of Sikh history during the period of Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur.

According to Khafi Khan, his account of the period after 1669 was based on his personal observations and the verbal testimony of other witnesses.

During 1768–1774, Maulvi Kahtr-ud-din edited and printed the book in Calcutta. English translations of its extracts appeared in H. M. Elliot and John Dowson's *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians* (Volume VII), and William Erskine's *History of India under Babar and Humayun*.

MUNTAKHAB UL-LUBĀB by Muhammad Hashim

lit. selected (records) of the wise and pure, is a history of India written in Persian with an Arabic title by Muhammad Hāshim or Hāshim 'Alī Khān, better known as Khāfī Khān. Completed in 1722, the work was edited and printed by Maulawī Kabīr ud-Dīn in Calcutta sometime during 1768-74. Extensive extracts translated into English are included in H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, vol. VII, as also in William Erskine, *History of India under Babar and Humayun*.

The author was the son of Khwājā Mīr, also historian, who had held a high station under Prince Murād, younger brother of Aurāngzīb, and who continued service under the latter after the murder of his master. Muhammad Hāshim, as he came of age, was put on various civil and military assignments by Emperor Aurāngzīb (1658-1707). He continued to serve until the reign of Farrukh-Sīyar (1716-19) and was later a dīwān or minister under Nawāb Chin Qilich Khān Nizām ul-Mulk, the founder Nizām of Hyderābād. The family is believed to have originally immigrated from Khwā, a country town near Nishāpur in Khurāsān, whence Hāshim adopted his title Khāfī (or more correctly Khwāfī)Khān.

The contents of Muntakhab ul-Lubāb may be divided into three parts : the first deals with local dynasties up to the Lodhīs; the second comprises a brief chronicle of the house of Taimūr the Lame (d. 1405) up to Emperor Akbar including the Sūr interlude; and the third and the most important part of the work covers almost a century and a quarter following the death of Akbar in 1605. The author claims that the account of the last 53 years (1669-1722) was based on his personal observations or on the verbal testimony of people who had been witnesses to the events.

The book is a valuable contemporary source of information about the period of Gurū Gobind Siṅgh and Bandā Siṅgh Bahādur. Upon Khāfī Khān's evidence, Aurāngzīb had ordered that the Gurū's deputies, i.e. masands, be removed and the Sikh temples razed to the ground; when Emperor Bahādur Shāh (1707-12) marched towards the Deccan, Gurū Gobind Siṅgh accompanied him with two or three hundred horsemen bearing spears; the death of the Gurū was caused by a dagger-stab. About Bandā Siṅgh, Khāfī Khān uses very harsh and abusive language, but admits that the government forces were unable to stand the onslaughts of the Sikhs in several parts of the Punjab. He also alludes to Bandā Siṅgh's practice of writing to Mughal faujdārs to surrender before actually attacking them, to a code of conduct strictly followed by Sikh warriors, and to a proper; though short-lived, civil administration set up by Bandā Siṅgh in territories he had conquered. His contumelious tone notwithstanding, Khāfī Khān pays tribute to the Sikhs' determination and daring, especially during their nocturnal attacks on the imperial forces and their deadly sallies when besieged. He has also recorded the heroic story of a young Sikh captive who refused to be spared the fate his comrades had met with despite the fact that his mother had obtained a royal decree for his release.

Ibratnamah by Sayyid Muhammad Qāsim

Ibratnamah by Sayyid Muhammad Qāsim of Lahore, is a rare manuscript in Persian containing the history of the empire of Delhi from the death of Aurāngzīb to the fall of the two Sayyid brothers, Abdullah and Husain 'Alī, known as bādshāhgar or king-makers. Its author was a protege of Amīr ul-Umarā Husaīn 'Alī, one of the Sayyid brothers, and was therefore a firsthand witness to contemporary affairs of State. Apart from some well-known episodes and the three wars of succession, he writes about the disturbed rule of Farrukh Sīyar, the effete rulers like Rafī ud-Darjāt, Rafī ud-Daulah and shadowy figures such as Ibrāhīm and Nekū Sīyar. The manuscript treats of the Sikhs and their religion in comparatively sympathetic terms. Bābā (Gurū) Nānak is portrayed as a faqīr or dervish who, born of a Hindu family, had assimilated much from Islam and who, turning aside from all name and fame, had advocated peace and justice for all. Gurū Nānak's formula describing the Divine, viz. "Ek oṅkār satnām, kartār (sic), nirbhau, nirbair, akāl mūrat, "was, according to Qāsim, on the lips of every Sikh. He passed on his high ideas not to any of his sons, but to a disciple of humble origin. Qāsim mentions other early Gurūs and notices the new developments under later Gurūs, Tegh Bahādur and Gobind Sīngh, the latter having laid the foundation of the Khālsā Panth. 'Ibratnāmah also contains a detailed account of Bandā Sīngh. Here, however, Qāsim becomes partisan. He refers to Bandā (Sīngh) pejoratively as safāq-i-bebāk (reckless blood-shedder), dajjāl (impostor), shu'badahbāz (conjurer) and khirs (bear).

He describes in detail his pillage of Samānā, Sunām, Mustafābād, Saḍhaurā, etc., his inroads upon the Gangetic Doāb, sack of Sirhind, escape from his besieged headquarters, Lohgarh, his last stand near Gurdāspur and ultimate capture and execution. The author could not however help admiring the zeal and desperate valour of the Sikhs. He states that when he was in the service of the deputy nāzim or administrator, 'Ārif Beg, he observed with his own eyes the superiority of these people and the cool courage that they displayed in sallying out of the Fort with swords, arrows, and guns in their hands and repelling the imperial army.

Ibratnama by Khair ud Din Muhammad Allahabad

("The Book of Warning") a Persian manuscript copies of which are preserved in Oriental Public (Khuda Bakhsh) Library, Bariklpur, Patna; Asiatic Society, Calcutta; British Library, London; and Khalsa College, Amritsar, is a detailed history of the reigns of Alamgir II (1754-59) and Shah Alam II (1759-1806), with a summary account of their ancestors beginning with Taimur (d. 1405). Khair udDin was a teacher and historiographer who along with his three brothers had been in the service of the British. He spent his last days at Jaunpur enjoying government pension which he had earned principally by the assistance rendered to James Anderson, British resident with Mahadji Scindia in 1784-85, in his negotiations with the Marathas. The Ibratndmah is primarily concerned with the life of Shah Alam II and dwells extensively upon his earlier life as Prince 'Ali Gauhar; his stay at Allahabad as a protege of the British; his restoration to the throne of Delhi; and treatment he received at the hands of Ghulam Qadir Ruhila. The author is concerned more with the Emperor and his heir apparent and their relations with the Marathas, Jats, Rajputs and the Ruhilas than with the Sikhs. There are references in the work to the capture of Mughlani Begam, widow of Mu'm ulMulk (Mir Mannu of Sikh chronicles), in 1756 by the Delhi Wazir, Imad udMulk Ghazi udDin, who entrusted the government of Lahore and Multan to Adina Beg Khan for an annual tribute of Rs 30 lakhs. There are occasional references to Sikh chiefs of the cisSutlej region such as Raja Amar Singh of Patiala and Gajpat Singh of Jind in connection with the imperial campaign of 1779 in these parts led by Abd ulAhd Khan Majd udDaulah.

TARIKHIMUZAFFARI, by Muhammad 'All Khan Ansari,

is the title of a Persian manuscript of much historical value copies of which are preserved in several libraries in India and abroad. The author belonged to a prominent family of Arab extraction, long resident at Panipat, in presentday Haryana state. His grandfather, Lutfullah Khan Sadiq, a haftliazan mansabdar, had been a minister under emperors Farrukh Siyar and Muhammad Shah and was the governor of Delhi at the time of Nadir Shah's invasion (1739). His father, Hidayatullah Khan had held a panjhazan mansab. Muhammad 'All Khan himself was daroghahi'adalat faujdan (superintendent of criminal court) ofTirhut and Hajipur in Bihar. The work, completed in 1225 AH/AD 1810, is a history of the Indian Timurides, i.e. the Mughals, from the beginning to Emperor Akbar II (180637). The account, sketchy in respect of the period from Babur to Aurangzib, is more detailed in respect of the later Mughals and Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Durrani. The author had already written a much larger book, Bahr ulMawwaj in nine parts. The TankhiMuzaffan corresponds to the last part of that work, at places reproducing passages verbatim. Of special interest to students of Sikh history are references in the Tarikh to the Sikhs at two places the imperial campaign against Banda Singh Bahadur and the role of the Sikh misis as allies of Jats and Zabita Khan Ruhila against the imperial prime minister Najaf Khan (d. 1782). Unlike some other Muslim chroniclers of the period, Muhammad 'Ah Khan's language is restrained and free from calumny when writing about the Sikhs. The campaign of 'Abd usSamad Khan and his son Zakariya Khan against Banda Singh Bahadur is described in detail. As the imperial forces besieged the Sikh stronghold (at GurdasNangal), they setup an alang, a virtual wall of fortifications around the fortress. Yet Sikhs, says the author, remained undaunted. They came out in day time and they made sallies by night, falling fiercely upon the besiegers and returning to their place of refuge after the attack. The TankhiMuzaffari does not contain the harrowing details of the massacre of Banda Singh, his infant son and his followers, but it doesnarrate the story of a Sikh youth yet in his teens whose widowed mother had managed to secure orders for his release but who, when asked to leave, refused to do so and insisted that he be executed like others, too.

Siyar-ul-Mutakhkherin by Sayyid Ghulam Hussain

Siyar-ul-Mutakhkherin a voluminous historical work by Sayyid Ghulam Husain Tabatabai. He produced the work during the days of the fall of Muslim rule in Bengal (and also in India). Born in Delhi in 1140 AH/ 1727-28 AD in an aristocratic Muslim family, the author was well connected with the ruling elite of the time and completed his work in 1781 AD, ie almost a quarter of a century after the battle of palashi (1757 AD). The family migrated to Murshidabad in 1732, and thence to Azimabad (Patna) with ALIVARDI KHAN in 1733 AD. The family of the author, being related to Alivardi, also rose to prominence with the latter's rise to power. His father Hedayat Ali Khan was Bakhshi (Paymaster General) of ZAINUDDIN AHMAD KHAN, son in law of Alivardi and deputy governor of Patna, the author's paternal and maternal uncles also occupied important positions in the government of Alivardi. The author himself and his brothers also held offices in the government. Ghulam Husain was a well educated and widely read man.

The Siyar-ul-Mutakhkherin is in three volumes. Volume I gives an account of the geography, climate, animals, forts, saints and Ulama of Hindustan, and briefly surveys its history from the epic age to the reign of AURANGZEB. Volume II discusses the history of Bengal from the death of Aurangzeb and deals with the nizamat of Murshidabad, the relations of the English with the nawabs, the battle of Palashi, and establishment of English supremacy in Bengal and Bihar together with British administrative system. Volume III discusses the history of the Nizam of Haidarabad, Haidar Ali of Mysore, Nawab-Wazirs of Oudh, Emperor Muhammad Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasions and his wars with the Marathas. The volume comes to an end after the affairs of the English upto 1781 AD.

M Raymond, a Frenchman, took the name of Haji Mustapha after his conversion to Islam and translated volume II into English. The translation ends with Shujauddaula's coming to terms and paying compensation to the English after the defeat of the confederacy at Buxar. The volumes II and III of the Siyar cover the history of the period from 1707 to 1781, for which there is no comprehensive historical work produced by the indigenous historians. These two volumes are also very important for reconstructing the history of Bengal and Bihar during the nawabi period. The author is not only contemporary, he also gives eye-witness account of many events. Moreover he acted as an envoy on several occasions: of Raja Ramnarain to Mir Jafar and to Prince Ali Gauhar; of Major Carnac to Mir Qasim and of Mir Qasim to the English in Calcutta. So Ghulam Husain lived in the political

centres and was directly or indirectly connected with the persons involved in the political feuds and had the advantage of getting personal knowledge that he utilised in writing the history. There are other contemporary books, but they deal with particular periods or particular nawabs, the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkheirn* is the most comprehensive; covering the whole period of more than seventy years, at a time when the Muslim rule came to an end giving place to the English rule.

The *Siyar* is important from another point of view. It gives a good deal of information about the affairs of the English in Bengal upto the governor generalship of WARREN HASTINGS. The author dwelt on the rules and regulations, revenue and judicial administration of the English, which is not found in any other contemporary book written in Persian language.

The importance of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkherin*, however, is diminished due to several reasons. First, the author being a Shia gave undue praises to Shia political personages. Secondly, as a time-server, he proved faithless on occasions to his benefactors, even as an envoy he did not discharge his duties faithfully. Thirdly he was hostile to Nawab SIRAJUDDAULA and often wrote ill of him in spite of the fact that the nawab was generous to him and the author's father was a servant of Siraj's father Zainuddin. Fourthly, Ghulam Husain had always taken a pro-English attitude. This was probably due to the fact that the author wrote his book when the English rule was firmly established.

The *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkherin*, nevertheless, is important because it fills a gap in the historical literature of a period of momentous political changes in Bengal and Bihar.
[Abdul Karim]

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