Interpreting the *Qasbah* Conversation:

Muslims and *Madīnah* Newspaper, 1912-1924

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Abstract

This thesis' original contribution to knowledge is to indicate the unique contribution of *qasbah*-based Urdu newspapers to the emergence of an Urdu public sphere in early 20th century South Asia, using as a primary lens the Urdu newspaper *Madīnah*. In doing so, this thesis will shed light on debates relating to Muslim religious identity, urban life, social status, and gender reform. *Madīnah* newspaper was published in Bijnor *qasbah* in Bijnor district, UP, from 1912 onwards. *Qasbah* is an untranslatable term referring to the lowest level of urban settlement in North and Central India, which developed in tandem with market towns (or *ganj*s) in agricultural districts. *Qasbah*s were also characterized by vibrant traditions of Sufi devotion. As a result of their local significance, kinship groups in these settlements developed strong links to first Mughal, then colonial administrations. *Ashrāf* is a title roughly translated as "noble," distinguishing an elite level of society dating from the advent of the Mughal Empire. By the early 20th century, elite, literate *qasbah* dwellers increased their attachment to their *ashrāf* identity, even as the definition of that social status group was being transformed. The nature of *ashrāf* conceptions of the *qasbah* in the Urdu newspaper conversation sheds new insights into the nature of the Urdu public sphere, complicating existing narrative explanations of UP Muslim identity transformations.

In the 12 years that constitute the span of the study, international developments such as the Italo-Turkish War, the Balkan Wars, and World War I, with domestic transformations in municipal policies and the activism of some Hindu groups motivated Muslims to redefine their place in early 20th century society. At the same time, the early 20th century saw the rising prominence of the *qasbah* as a centre of spiritual and cultural

life among *ashrāf* Muslims. World War I and the non-cooperation movement threatened the British Empire's hold on South Asia. In the midst of these shifting sands stood the city of Bijnor, a backwoods *qasbah* in the district of the same name. Bijnor's publication *Madīnah* provided a regional platform for scholars, laymen, and poets to discuss their place in the new order. As part of a network of literary publications exchanged between *qasbah*s in the first half of the twentieth century, *Madīnah* shaped and complicated gender boundaries, religious identity, social status, and political alliance, all in the service of the Muslim *ummah*, or community.

This thesis places *Madīnah* in the context of the broader Urdu newspaper market and the incipient newspaper culture of *qasbah*s, which both reflected the broadened geographic horizon of the *qasbatī ashrāf* and placed a premium on the *qasbah* as a place set apart from the city. After laying this foundation, the thesis turns to the place of Islam in *qasbah* newspapers and *Madīnah*. Newspapers reflected a division among *ashrāf* regarding the centrality of Islam in elite culture, revealing an ideological division between the *qasbah* and major urban centres Delhi, Lucknow, and Calcutta. *Madīnah* and other newspapers sought to establish an indelible link between Islam and *ashrāf* identity, in contrast to some urban newspapers, which sought to lay the groundwork instead for a secular, nationalized Muslim identity. This thesis then turns to the expanding geographic horizons of *Madīnah* newspaper, both enabled by novel technology and neutralized as a threat by careful framing of international and trans-regional content. The subsequent chapter deals with *Madīnah* 's Women's Newspaper, which demonstrated a trend toward gender ventriloquism in reformist approaches to gender. Many articles penned ostensibly by women had male authors; *Madīnah*'s articles

expressed a complex set of reactions to intimate female experiences, including curiosity, fascination, and anxiety. *Qasbah* newspapers offer new avenues for insight into the tensions that characterized the Urdu public of the early 20th century. This thesis highlights the character of *qasbatī ashrāf*'s engagement with the broader literary conversation via newspapers during a time of dramatic social transformation, in the process contributing to the form of the Urdu public sphere.

This thesis is approximately 82,000 words in length, excluding the bibliography. I include this information according to form GSO.21.1, which states that candidates should give the approximate number of words in their theses for the benefit of examiners where a word limit is imposed.

Dedicated to Mom, Dad, and Kate,
just because

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Abbreviations used:

Madīnah – Akhbār-i Madīnah

BL – British Library, London

Corr. – Correspondence

CUL – Cambridge University Library

DG –District Gazetteer of the United Provinces

FR – Fortnightly Report

IG – Imperial Gazetteer of India

IOR – India Office Records

Mss. – Manuscripts

NAI - National Archives of India

NMM – Nehru Memorial Museum, New Delhi

NWP –North-West Provinces and Awadh

OUBL – Oxford University Bodleian Library

PL – Personal Library

Poll. – Political

SR – Settlement Report

Supp. – Supplementary notes

UP – United Provinces of Agra and Awadh

UPNNR - Native Newspaper Reports of the North-West Provinces or the North-West Provinces and Awadh or the United Provinces

UPS – Uttar Pradesh State Archives

Preface: Transliteration and Citation Method

The system of transliteration used in this thesis invokes the F. Steingass system of transliteration, using some alterations to accommodate sounds that appear only in Urdu and not in Persian or Arabic.[1] Where a retroflex vowel appears, it is usually signified by a dot or line below the letter (e.g. ḍ for ڈ). The Urdu character ث is represented as "s̲."

As Steingass has stated: "In the comparatively few cases where *sh* and *zh* are to be pronounced as separate letters, a mark is placed between (*s,h and z,h*), showing that the s or z terminates one syllable, and the aspirated *h* begins another."

In the case of و and ی, the transliteration is *w* or *y* except in word-final cases, when *v* is used in order to capture the extra emphasis necessary at the end of a word.

In this descriptive system, there are three "elementary vowels" represented by the letters *a*, *i*, and *u* which correspond to the equivalent sounds in the English words *son*, *sick*, and *pull*. These sounds correspond to the Urdu characters *zabar* (◌َ), *zer* (◌ِ), and *pesh* (◌ُ). The long forms of these vowels are represented by the roman characters *ā*, *ī*, *ū,* which correspond to the equivalent sounds in the American English words *tall*, *creep*, and *tube*. There are also the sounds *o* and *e*, which correspond to the sounds in the English words *home* and *hay*. While these are diphthongs in construction (*o* etymologically combines the sounds *a* and *u*, and *e* combines *a* and *ī*) Urdu does not pronounce these vowels as

[1] Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including Arabic Words and Phrases to be Met with in Persian Literature*, 2nd ed., ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1930), vii-viii.

diphthongs. They are here referred to as diphthongs etymologically, with the understanding that Urdu pronounces these sounds as pure vowels. Other diphthongs include *ai* (representing the sound ā + i) and *au* (representing the sound ā + u). These two diphthongs are roughly captured in the American English words *fail* and *stout*.

A word-final nasalized sound is represented by a capital N. ‘Ain appears as ‘.

Place names are spelled according to the accepted English spelling, with diacritics included in cases where clarification is necessary. Names of people are spelled according to the common usage in English; if that use is unknown, for instance in the cases of authors who do not write in English, then this transliteration method is also applied to names of those scholars as well.

Urdu Transliteration Table:

ṣ	ص		a, ā	ا, آ
ẓ	ض		b	ب
ṯ	ط		p	پ
z̤	ظ		t	ت
‘	ع		ṭ	ٹ

gh	غ		s̲	ث
f	ف		j	ج
q	ق		ch	چ
k	ک		ḥ	ح
g	گ		kh	خ
l	ل		d	د
m	م		d̲	ڈ
n	ن		z̲	ذ
w (v)	و		r	ر
h	ه, ہ, ۂ		ṛ	ڑ
h	ھ		z	ز
’	ع		zh	ژ
ī	ی		s	س
e	ے		sh	ش

I have employed diacritics whenever doing so adds beneficial context to the reader or to eliminate potential confusion regarding pronunciation. When using a number of common South Asian proper names I often do not include diacritics, on the assumption that eliminating these clues will not impede the reader's understanding. Several of these words are included with diacritics in the glossary in Appendix I.

For citations I have used the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1912 Bijnor Majīd Hasan sold his wife's jewellery to found the newspaper *Madīnah*. This newspaper pledged to be "the friend of the *mulk*, the life of the *qaum.*"[2] In the same year, editorials critiquing colonial policies related to Aligarh University appeared in Muhammad Yaqub Bijnori's *Al Khalīl*, which in its previous incarnation had only discussed local and agricultural matters.[3] In subsequent years, Bijnori periodicals *Madīnah*, *Saḥīfa*, and *Al Khalīl* decried the destruction of the Kanpur Mosque on behalf of the Muslim community, their approaches distinct from that of newspapers in large cities.[4] In the same period Maulwī Habīb ur-Rahmān founded *Al Qasīm* to discuss the state of education and religious practice[5] and Hasan's *Ṣaḥīfa* spoke against the censorship of Mohammad 'Alī's *Hamdard* and *Comrade*.[6] When *qasbah* intellectuals started their own newspaper conversation, distinctive from that conversation of large urban areas, a process of broadening horizons and increased public engagement was occurring among the *ashrāf* in North Indian *qasbah*s. The formation of a newspaper conversation rooted in the *qasbah* context offers novel insights into the Urdu public of the early 20th century.

This thesis' original contribution to knowledge will be an analysis of how *qasbah*-based newspapers uniquely reflected transformations in the Urdu public between 1912

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[2] The English translation is "friend of the country, life of the nation." The Urdu transliteration is: *mulk kā rafīq, qaum kā* (sic) *jāN*." Majīd Hasan, Title Page, *Madīnah*, 1 May 1912, 1.
[3] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces during the Year 1912* (Simla: Government Central Branch Press,[1913]).
[4] *Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers Published in the Punjab, North Western Provinces, Oudh, and the Central Provinces.* (1900-1925).704-5, 733, 1054-55.
[5] This occurred in 1911 in Deoband. Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces during the Year 1912* (Simla: Government Central Branch Press, [1913]).
[6] *Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers Published in the Punjab, North Western Provinces, Oudh, and the Central Provinces*, 1913, 846.

and 1924 approximately. This analysis will contribute to a better understanding of how the *ashrāf*, and many UP Muslims, interacted with issues of community identity, education, religion, and nationalist identity. *Madīnah* newspaper will form the primary lens into the world of the literate *qasbah* in this thesis. *Madīnah*, based in Bijnor *qasbah* from 1912, emerged as the most widely disseminated nationalist, Indian-language publication in UP in 1922. Even after the Khilafat Movement collapsed in 1924, transforming the role of *ashrāf* Muslims in public life, *Madīnah* remained a forum of the utmost importance for Muslim Urdu speakers. Discussion of an Urdu public sphere stands at the intersection of conversations regarding the history and influence of Islamic reformist movements and sectarian divisions, as well as the path-dependencies of communalism and Muslim nationalism on Partition, and reformist conceptions of gender. This thesis also speaks to the nature of Urdu-speakers' interactions with other various South Asian publics emerging in the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries.

The 20th century Urdu public, both in contrast to the Urdu public of the nineteenth century and other competing publics of the 20th century, built on conversations among periodicals, political institutions, literary organizations, and publications. The contributions of *qasbah* publications were necessarily linked to the broader newspaper discourse, but nevertheless distinct from the voices of Urdu-speakers in large urban centres. Like many other Urdu periodicals, *qasbah* newspapers drew from English publication models and linked themselves to the Indo-Persian *akhbār navīs* tradition.[7] Newspapers based in *qasbah*s were distinctive in their close identification with *qasbah*

[7] Margrit Pernau, "The Delhi Urdu Akhbar: Between Persian Akhbarat and English newspapers," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 18 (2003), 105-131.; Ulrike Stark, "Politics, Public Issues and the Promotion of Urdu Literature: Avadh Akhbar, the First Urdu Daily in Northern India," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 18 (2003), 66-94.

roots, concern for international trends as much as local concerns, and recognition of reformist Islam as a unifying influence. A few of these newspapers, particularly *Madīnah*, became widely read as the Khilafat Movement gained momentum, and remained notable until 1947 and beyond. This popularity reflected a resonance among Indian Muslims for these publications' combination of acute political awareness couched in the *qasbah* context. While the direct impact of any set of publications is difficult to measure, a study of Urdu *qasbah* newspapers between 1912 and 1924 yields new insights into the Urdu public sphere's broadening geographic horizon and malleable negotiation of spiritual and political matters.

More so than a study of newspapers in large urban areas, a study of *qasbah* publications captures a group of contributors to the 20th century Urdu public often overlooked in scholarship. A *qasbah*'s significance often has been measured by the number of *ashrāf* who trace their origins or education to a specific place after moving on to a prominent urban area,[8] rather than a *qasbah*'s particular manifestation of broader social and political trends. For instance, Deoband, which has educated generations of reformist Muslims in the art of right, moral living according to the strictures of Islam, has become one of the most prominent *qasbah*s in South Asian scholarship because of its links to prominent Deobandis across North India.[9] Scholarship by Mushirul Hasan, Justin Jones, Raisur Rahman, and Parvez Adil remain notable exceptions to the trend to emphasize the top-

[8] Robinson's appendix to *Separatism among Indian Muslims* offers a wealth of information regarding the *qasbah* roots of many of non-cooperation's most prominent Muslims, including Hafiz Nazir Ahmad (1836-1912), Chiragh Ali (1844-95), Abdul Majid Budauni (- 1931). Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims 1860-1923*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1974). 423, 427-8.

[9] Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982).

down influence of urban centres, instead exploring the cultural, political, and economic history of specific *qasbah*s.[10]

Madīnah and a few of its compatriots became prominent members of the newspaper conversation. In the space of a decade *Madīnah*'s circulation increased from 350 to 12,500, making it one of the most broadly circulated Urdu papers in 1922 UP.[11] *Madīnah* and its star journalist Nūr ul-Hasan formed the crest of a wave of print originating in North Indian *qasbah*s between 1905 and 1915, whose small-town perspective contributed to the formation of an Urdu public.[12] Enabled by technology, several decades of Urdu newspaper tradition, and the rumblings of political intrigue in Europe, Urdu newspapers in some of the most isolated, yet nevertheless culturally vibrant, areas of North India entered into public conversations which previously had been limited to the institutions of large urban centres like Calcutta, Delhi, Lahore, and Lucknow. Among this group, discussions of the *ummah*, or the Muslim community, originating in the *qasbah* context became a fulcrum from which to engage in conversation with not only colonial rule but also urban-based members of the Urdu *ashrāf*.

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[10] Justin Jones, "The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha," *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2009), 871-908.; Mushirul Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh* (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004).; M. Raisur Rahman, "Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin), 1-30.; Parvez Adil, "*Madīnah Akhbār*, Thesis Manuscript" (PhD, University of Najibabad, 2013).

[11] Gyanendra Pandey, *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh 1926-1934: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), 64.

[12] Newspapers based in *qasbah*s that rose to at least minor prominence between 1900 and 1942 include *Al Khalīl* (Bijnor), *Al Qasīm* (Deoband), *Insāf* (Amroha), *Hilāl-i Sidāqat* (Bijnor), *Al Bāshīr* (Etawah), *Almorā Akhbār* (Almora), *Insād* (Basti), *Itiḥād* (Amroha), *Manṣūr* (Bijnor), *Madīnah* (Bijnor), *Najat* (Bijnor), *Tablīgh* (Budaun), *Toḥfa-i Hind* (Bijnor), *Zulqarnain* (Budaun) . *Indian Newspaper Reports, C. 1868-1942: Part 4 Detailed Listing of Newspaper and Periodical Titles* (Adam Matthew Website: Adam Matthew,[2014]).

Madīnah and other *qasbah* newspapers did not indicate a specific approach to political and social issues, but instead represented an expansion of the public sphere to a new set of spaces. This expansion introduced new ideas into the literary conversation empowered to influence the broader Urdu public. Acknowledging the diversity and plasticity of this public, which increasingly in the early 20th century included *qasbah*s, allows us, using the phrases of Barnita Bagchi, to avoid the temptation to use *Madīnah* as a "reductive metonym" for the "over-hegemonic category" of Muslim nationalism.[13] At the same time, the Urdu public sphere of the early twentieth century is of profound interest precisely because it would later become intrinsically linked to the movement for Pakistan, by activists' choice of Urdu as the nationalist language. That movement built on a system of symbols, images, and common uses of language that the Urdu literary sphere, and therefore Urdu newspapers, were a significant part.

Competing Spheres: The Case for an Urdu Public Sphere

A public sphere orbiting around the star of Urdu flourished in the early 20th century, influencing Urdu-speakers' conceptions of nationalism and advocating a closer association between language and religion. Several scholars have noted the distinct impact of language and linguistic divisions on definitions of community in the South Asian context.[14] The

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[13] Barnita Bagchi, "Two Lives: Voices, Resources, and Networks in the History of Female Education in Bengal and South Asia," *Women's History Review* 19, no. 1 (2010), 51-69.

[14] Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.; For general discussions of language and nationalism, see: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991).; Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (London: Cambridge UP, 1974). For a study linking literature and nationalism, see: Sudhir Chandra, *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1992).

history and emergence of the Hindi, Urdu, and Panjabi public spheres has received increased attention in the early 2000's, indicating the relevance of early 20th century publics to contemporary discussions of nationalism.[15]

Any conversation involving nationalism stands on the shoulders of Benedict Andersons' *Imagined Communities*, which delineated features of the rise of the nation as "the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time."[16] Anderson pointed out that the rise of "nation-ness" was linked to three trends: a decline in the belief that sacred texts have privileged access to or exclusively embody truth, the decline of belief in a central monarch ruling by divine right, and the development of a sense of shared experience of time among a group of people.[17] These trends interacted with the rise of print capitalism to facilitate the rise of the nation as axiomatic. The development of print technology in tandem with the emergence of capitalism facilitated the expansion of the book market, which simultaneously catalysed the vernacularization of language and unified fields of communication between speakers of similar dialects. Print as a field of communication enabled increasing awareness of a shared culture among readers, lending a sense of fixity and antiquity to language in the process. In this way "print capitalism" became an effective tool for the imagining of the nation. While the model Anderson lays out is Western-centric, the public sphere in the South Asian context also can be seen as one result of the emergence of print capitalism, in tandem with threats posed to the divine

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[15] For information on the Hindi public sphere, see: Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere.*; Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bhāratendu Hariśchandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999).
[16] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 1-8.
[17] Ibid., 21-36.

authority of the Caliph, the gradual shift to vernacular translations of religious texts, and the concomitant sense of shared experience enabled by print capitalism.

The Urdu public had come into existence long before the turn of the 20th century, of course. The small section of society literate in Urdu had been engaged in a vibrant newspaper tradition since the mid-1800s. Works of scholarship on *Āwadh Akhbār* (Lucknow),[18] *Dehlī Urdū Akhbār*,[19] and *Jam-i JahāN Numā* (Calcutta),[20] have referred to the advent of print newspaper as a continuation of *akhbārāt* culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an invocation of English printing models, and elision of journalism and spiritual guidance.[21] Syed Ahmad Khan, founder of the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College (today Aligarh University), transformed manuscripts into print by using primarily English models and maintained strong links to the English public and secular Muslim politics.[22] Other newspapers, like *qasbah* newspapers in the early 20th century, continued the vibrant tradition of lithographic print, Islamic modes of decoration on papers, and persistent focus on the state of the Muslim community defined equally by the international context and by the local environment.

Lelyveld's work covers a span of time when the term "print capitalism" in relation to Urdu was hyperbolic (one of the earliest Urdu newspapers, *Sayyad al-akhbār* had 39

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[18] Stark, *Politics, Public Issues and the Promotion of Urdu Literature: Avadh Akhbar, the First Urdu Daily in Northern India*, 66-94.

[19] Margrit Pernau, "The Delhi Urdu Akhbar: between Persian Akhbarat and English newspapers," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 18 (2003): 105-131.

[20] Margrit Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth-Century Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 116.

[21] Pernau, "The Delhi Urdu Akhbar," 122.

[22] Sir Syed's literary world, linked closely to communication channels among the British government, was characterized by an unusual departure from lithographic print and adoption of type, a shift from ornate to simple formats, and a focus from general issues to those specific to the Aligarh College. See: David Lelyveld, "Sir Sayyid's Public Sphere: Urdu Print and Oratory in Nineteenth Century India," *Cracow Indological Studies* XI, no. 11 (2009), 237-267.

subscribers before it closed) to a period when news print found its footing, notably demonstrated through the success of the bilingual *Tahzīb ul-akhlāq*.[23] By the early twentieth century, newspapers managed to stay afloat independent of government patronage; "print capitalism," referred to by Benedict Anderson as one enabling condition for the emergence of a public sphere capable of making demands of the government, had flourished.[24] The advent of print technology to India in the early nineteenth century had brought increasing numbers of Urdu readers access to religious and secular texts previously available only to elites.[25] Influenced by the efforts of European publishers, as in the case of Unani medical texts, new routes of access offered Muslims increased access to medical and spiritual knowledge, which had previously been the domain of scholars.[26] Newspapers in urban centres, such as *Āwadh Akhbār* helped form an Urdu public delineated by culture, rather than religion. In the public debate conducted over Unani medicine by newspapers such as *Āwadh Akhbār* in the nineteenth century, contributors defended the use of traditional medicine on the grounds of the *mulk*, or nation. This revelation had two effects: first, the newspaper discourse created a "public sphere" where reforms to medical licensing were acceptable. Second, the emphasis on national context "had the effect of partially detaching Unani from the larger world of Islam."[27] These diverse pioneers of Urdu newspaper publication, usually located in urban areas with access to

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[23] Ibid.
[24] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 55-60.; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989), 26-30.
[25] Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1, Special Issue: How Social, Political and Cultural Information Is Collected, Defined, Used and Analyzed (Feb., 1993), 229-251.
[26] Seema Alavi, "Unani Medicine in the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere: Urdu Texts and the Oudh Akhbar," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 42 (March, 2005), 118-9.
[27] Ibid.

lithograph technology, assisted in establishing an early Urdu public characterized by the participation and control of 'ulama as well as the emergence of a space in which it was increasingly acceptable to challenge that authority.[28]

Other scholarship has looked at the increasing power of the Urdu public sphere in the nineteenth and 20th centuries to transform ideas, taking into account other types of literary contributions. Amina Yaqin's documentation of transformations to the Urdu autobiography tradition focused on the nineteenth century milieu.[29] Nile Green has pointed out that the hybridization of modes of poetry dissemination in late nineteenth century Hyderabad, involving print as well as oral dissemination, transformed poetry into more morally conservative realm, eschewing the sensuality that had previously permeated it. This was a notable trend among reformist poets, among whom the "velocity of change" increased with the ensuing battle between 'ulama and Sufis for canonical primacy.[30] Ryan Perkins' work has documented the emergence, in the early 20th century, of "the printing press' new-found role as one of the main forums for public debate." The representative voices of the vigorous public debate, which Perkins describes, over Brijnarayan Chakbast's (1882-1926) publication of a new edition of Pandat Daya Shankar Kaul Nasīm's (1811-1843) *Gulzār-i Nasīm*, were newspapers located in Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, and Hyderabad.[31] As the power of publication increased in the public sphere, the influence of

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[28] Pernau, "The Delhi Urdu Akhbar."; Alavi, "Unani Medicine."; Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change."

[29] Amina Yaqin, "Truth, Fiction, and Autobiography in the Modern Urdu Narrative Tradition," *Comparative Critical Studies* 4, no. 3 (2007), 379-402.

[30] Nile Green, "The Propriety of Poetry: Morality and Mysticism in the Nineteenth Century Urdu Religious Lyric," *Middle Eastern Literatures: Incorporating Edebiyat* 13, no. 3 (16 Dec, 2010), 299-314.

[31] C. Ryan Perkins, "From the Meḥfil to the Printed Word: Public Debate and Discourse in Late Colonial India," *Indiana Economic & Social History Review* 50 (2013), 47-73.

urban publishing networks offering wide audiences and reliable communication grew. The character and influence of the expansion of newspaper culture to the *qasbah* remains largely unknown for the period in the 20th century when the newspaper became central to the Urdu public.

The public sphere has become a space of contention for scholars of India seeking to understand the specific character of India's remarkably numerous, overlapping publics in the century before independence and Partition.[32] Amir Ali has cited the development path of India's public sphere, and its tendency to normalize majoritarian views, as partially responsible for the contemporary dominance of Hindutva policies.[33] There is a growing concern to define broadly the public sphere of Islam across national boundaries in the Western context as well. In a contemporary context where Islam is linked with issues of public safety and migration, definitions of a "Muslim public" promise to offer non-Muslim intellectual and political leaders guidance in how to interact with the Muslim world.[34] These studies are often situated in western, European perspectives where Islam is linked with international security concerns and concerns about migration. Predicating the discussion of a public on the existence of a single, albeit diverse public sphere, however, renders the process of complicating broad narratives more difficult. It is not a simple matter to separate the Urdu and Hindi public spheres in this period; in the same way,

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[32] For studies attempting to focus on regional or South Asian trends see: Isabel Hofmeyr, Preben Kaarsholm and Bodil Folke Frederiksen, "Introduction: Print Cultures, Nationalisms and Publics of the Indian Ocean," *Africa* 81, no. 1 (2011), 1-22.; Lal and Rajan, "Ethnographies," 87-95.; Qaiser, "Resisting Colonialism."

[33] Amir Ali, "Evolution of Public Sphere in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 36, no. 26 (June-July, 2001), 2419-2425.

[34] Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman, *Public Islam and the Common Good* (Boston: Brill, 2004).; For a study of the public sphere of Islam in Europe, see: Ralph Grillo, "Islam and Transnationalism," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 5 (2004), 861-878.

linking either linguistic tradition to religion is fraught, since it is in this period that the links between language and religion were being transformed substantially.[35] In the early 20th century, while many Urdu newspapers were owned by Khatris, Kayasths, and other Hindu members of the *ashrāf*, *qasbah* newspapers emphasized the connection between Islam and Urdu.

An alternative to generalization has emerged in the mapping of dominant trends onto heterogenous expressions of political Islam in local contexts, focusing on Urdu and Muslims as inhabiting linked but separate public spaces.[36] Terenjit Sevea and Akbar Zaidi, working in the colonial context, discuss intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries employing a "Muslim hermeneutic," or a distinctively Islamic mode of interpreting texts, as an alternative to the imposition of a set of global trends. Essential to this interpretation is the role of local context in relation to religion.[37] Akbar Zaidi's thesis localizes the character of the Muslim *qaum* in the latter half of the nineteenth century, resisting the imposition of a single, normative Muslim public in that period. His work emphasizes difference over uniformity, encouraging a return to local nuance and elucidating differences.[38] This thesis seeks to build on this work, in order to complicate

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[35] Christopher King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1994), 130-145.
[36] For a cultural studies approach in the contemporary context, see: Vinay Lal and Gita Rajan, "Ethnographies of the Popular and the Public Sphere in India," *South Asian Popular Culture* 5, no. 2 (2007), 87-95.; For a similar approach to an example of the transition from childhood to womanhood in the nineteenth century context, see: Ruby Lal, *Coming of Age in Nineteenth-Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[37] Terenjit Sevea, "Islamist Questioning and Colonialism: Towards an Understanding of Islamist Oeuvre," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 7 (Oct, 2007), 1375-1399.
[38] S. Akbar Zaidi, "Contested Identities and the Muslim *Qaum* in Northern India: C. 1860-1900" (D.Phil, 2009, University of Cambridge), 1-35.

broad narratives of an Urdu public by approaching the *qasbah* newspaper conversation on its own terms.

Scholarship on the late nineteenth to early 20th century Urdu public sphere also has emphasized the advent of women on the public scene as increasing numbers of women published articles and edited women's reform journals.[39] At the turn of the century, women made forays into the public eye via literary endeavours, exposing the previously private world of women and family. *Qasbah* newspapers like *Madīnah* also published articles by both women and men aimed at both female and male readers. This thesis is also concerned to probe the nature of male reformism in this increasingly co-educational atmosphere, in which the *zenana* had drawn back its curtain to an increasing number of male readers, influencing their attitude toward women and themselves.

This study also owes a debt to the documentation of competing publics in the early 20th century, including those of Hindi and Panjabi. Farina Mir's work looks at the vitality of a Panjabi public, in resistance to government-mandated official language Urdu from the seventeenth century until the 20th century.[40] Even more significantly to this project is Francesca Orsini's work, which documents the development of a formative period in the development of the Hindi public sphere between 1920 and 1940.[41] Orsini's model for analysis of a public sphere oriented around language has been influential here. The Urdu

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[39] Asiya Alam, "Polygyny, Family and Sharafat: Discourses Amongst North Indian Muslims, Circa 1870–1918," *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 3 (2011), 631-668.; Azra Asghar Ali, "Recovery of the Female Voice through Women's Journals in Urdu in British India 1898-1947," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 21, no. 2 (1998), 61-86.; For analagous work on the Hindi public see: Shobna Nijhawan, *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere: Periodical Literature in Colonial North India* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012).

[40] Farina Mir, *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab* (London: University of California Press, 2010).

[41] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*.

newspaper as it represented a set of institutions that assisted in the creation of an Urdu public can only form one piece of the puzzle comprising the Urdu public sphere centred in North Indian *qasbah*s. From 1912 *Madīnah newspaper*, and later the *Madīnah Publishing* Company, encompassed two significant institutions with the most influence over the burgeoning public. We may apply to this Urdu public sphere what Orsini says about the Hindi public sphere: "The press, education and schools, literary genres, associations, and political activities were all spaces where language, ideas, literary tastes, and individual and group identities were reshaped, both consciously as well as by the dynamics and momentum of each medium."[42]

The term public sphere here, drawing upon Orsini's definition, refers to a social arena featuring the establishment of spaces for debate common to many people, while featuring an evolving set of norms of comportment that reflected awareness of spaces that were public.[43] Also necessary to this definition is the existence of "specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it"[44] as well as a common language used to communicate that information.

This thesis' vision of the Urdu public sphere appears for the most part through the lens of *Madīnah* newspaper's editors and readership. Of course, *Madīnah* is only one voice in the 20th literary milieu. A study depending so heavily on a single source risks eliding significant variations in the manifestation of the Urdu public in print. To mitigate this risk, this thesis richly contextualizes *Madīnah* as one member of a vibrant conversation between Urdu periodicals and the Urdu speaking public generally. What otherwise might seem like a

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[42] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, 7.
[43] Ibid., 1-10.
[44] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, 49.

myopic focus on a single newspaper is justified by the benefits that a thorough analysis of a single, prominent publication provides: aside from the narrative continuity established through family and local histories of Bijnor, *Madīnah* offers a crucial control example against which we may measure the path and reception of other Urdu language publications and volatile political issues. Just as importantly, this study shines a light on a familiar yet hazy category of early twentieth century life, simultaneously accessing a grassroots urban milieu that often slips through the cracks of scholarship.

The Urdu public sphere was formed both in opposition to the colonial state and the Hindi public sphere, while working in cooperation with Muslim social and political institutions.[45] While the aspects of the Urdu public sphere illustrated by *qasbah*-based Urdu newspapers described below do relate closely to local manifestations of Islam,[46] I wish to make a few crucial distinctions. Rather than focusing on religious identity, this thesis uses as its focal point the choice of Urdu as the language of communication, with the understanding that the decision to employ the Urdu language was a distinct decision from that to invoke a Muslim tradition. At the same time, it is important to note that the Urdu language and Muslim identity were becoming increasingly merged in this period. To an extent, as I discuss in the fourth chapter of this thesis, Urdu periodicals and particularly *Madīnah* reflected a crystallization of this association. Although uses of Urdu, Persian, and Arabic in *Madīnah* asserted the newspaper's affiliation with Islam, Urdu also invoked an Indo-Persianate tradition more closely allied to Mughal political norms than religious

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[45] For descriptions of the development of the Hindi public sphere in the early twentieth century, see: Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, 4-5.; Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bhāratendu Hariśchandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999).
[46] For a study focusing on the role of Islam in the public sphere, see: Dietrich Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 2006).

ideals.[47] Importantly, public opinion expressed through the paper reflected the elision of these two, previously separate identity strands.

A time of transformation in the literary space

The period between the end of the Balkan Wars and the collapse of the Khilafat Movement remains crucial for understanding the transformation of Urdu-speaking elite attitudes toward community boundaries and their relationship to colonial power.[48] In the case of Bijnor and UP, the conversation between an Urdu language newspaper and the *qasbah* environment offers a new perspective of this transformation. The remnants of the Mughal-era elite in the early twentieth century formed an increasingly self-conscious group with a particular interest in and influence on the development of pan-Islam and the nationalist movement.[49]

The span of time discussed in this thesis, 1912-1924, encompasses a dozen years in which Urdu newspapers' role in political and social organization transformed; increased access to print technology and international news of warfare in Europe may have catalysed this expansion. In this period *qasbah* newspapers expressed concern for the Ottoman victims of the Italo-Turkish War, for the protection of Muslim places of worship, Muslim municipal committee representation, and eventually came to embrace the anti-colonial fervour expressed in an outpouring of support for the non-cooperation and Khilafat

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[47] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, 4-5.
[48] Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims 1860-1923*, 175-289.; Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India: 1916-1928*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994).; Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Movements. These newspapers' powers of institutional organization and political power increased during the Khilafat movement. The fevered pace of political activity, and the particular role of Urdu newspapers in this period, renders these publications a significant source of insight. Newspapers originating in *qasbah*s have remained an overlooked, alternative lens into the Urdu-speaking, and increasingly Muslim, public of this formative period.

With this in mind, it is important to note that the Urdu public, of which *Madīnah* formed a significant voice, was severely limited in geographic expanse and the types of individuals in that region who participated in it. Spanning from Punjab in the North to Lucknow in the East, the heartland of the North Indian Urdu public lay in UP.[50] A limited number of individuals had access to it; literate males for the most part, readers would have been Muslim men educated in Urdu, as well as some Persian and Arabic, who drew heavily from Indo-Persian traditions.

Ashrāf and Social Status

The delineation of the *ashrāf* social group in this thesis draws from Benedict Anderson's work on imaginary communities and Max Weber's analysis of social status groups. Anderson encouraged consideration of nationalisms as more analogous to religion or kinship in their particularity to their environment;[51] in the same way, the specific contributions of the *qasbah* perspective to the Urdu public under consideration here were particular to that environment. While this work also draws on Jürgen Habermas' definition

[50] This geographic space overlaps significantly with the "Hindi heartland" Orsini identifies. Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, 6-12.
[51] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

of the "public sphere" by defining the public sphere as a space for private citizens to gather, express opinions on matters of common interest, and place pressure on the state, Habermas' definition hinges too much on the central role of the bourgeoisie in a hierarchical, feudal structure.[52] Habermas' use of the term "bourgeois" invokes a Marxist definition of a social group in control of means of wealth production. It is important to make a distinction between the organization of different types of nationalism (of which public-formation is arguably one) around relations of production and the organization of nationalisms defined by status signifiers.[53] The Urdu public under discussion here shares some characteristics of Habermas' bourgeoisie, in that the contributors and editors of Urdu newspapers identified as elite. On the other hand, however, most Muslims running and contributing to newspapers in the early 20th century classified as elite by their education and literacy would not have been wealthy by their contemporaries' standards. Post-1857, diminishing patronage, shrinking public service positions, and the shift from Urdu to Hindi as the official service language had taken their toll. Only after Majīd Hasan's *Madīnah* became a resounding success did he acquire any wealth from his publication.

At the same time, education traditions and kinship connections no doubt gave literate *ashrāf* Muslims manifold advantages, not least access to the literary sphere and therefore a line of communication with political power. Majīd Hasan, the proprietor and sometimes editor of *Madīnah*, pawned his possessions to gain enough capital to publish the newspaper and eke out what was, for many years, a humble existence. On the other hand,

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[52] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, 14-15.

[53] Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (London: Heinemann, 1960).; Barbara Metcalf, "Weber and Islamic Reform," in *Max Weber & Islam*, eds. Toby E. Huff and Wolfgang Schluchter (London: New Brunswick, 1999), 217.

his wife owned enough jewellery to fund an entrepreneurial enterprise. The *ashrāf* in this period who ran newspapers were an endangered elite, though nevertheless privileged in their ability to leave a lasting mark on history's page. The status signifiers of education and membership in political institutions were more significant currencies than monetary wealth for *qasbatī ashrāf* in the early twentieth century. The *qasbah* of the early twentieth century was rich in codes of honour and status, features that are a more relevant to discussions of the formation of its imagined communities.

Prior to 1857, contrary to colonial perceptions, *sharīf* (singular for "noble," the plural form of which is "*ashrāf*") was a social status designator conferred not only by birth but also by manner of living.[54] My interpretation of the *ashrāf* status group depends on the Weberian definition of "status groups" while acknowledging the import of Marxist "class situations."[55] To the extent that membership in the *ashrāf* was determined by honour, in Urdu expressed as *'izzat* or *ghairat*, the *ashrāf* status signifier stood independent from economic considerations. However, Weber's interpretation has acknowledged that social groups facilitated by religious ideas may still form "a basis for monopolizing economic opportunities" even if financial considerations were not of primary importance in forming the social group.[56] Muzaffar Alam's scholarship has demonstrated the integration of both Hindu scribal groups (Kayasths, Khatris, and Kashmiri Brahmans) and those of noble Muslim heritage (Sayyids, Shaikhs, Pathans, or Mughals) into a shared Indo-Persian culture

[54] Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth-Century Delhi*, 60.
[55] Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait*, 104-6.
[56] Ibid.

under Mughal rule.[57] After 1857, these gentlemen saw their traditional cultural values dwindling along with patronage levels. Haunted by the past and concerned at the fragility of future prospects, *ashrāf* in the latter half of the nineteenth century recorded and enshrined the literary culture of the Mughal period in textual form.[58]

One method of discussing morality and manners was through *adab* literature, which *Madīnah* invoked. The term *adab*, signifying manners, conduct, and morality, has been thoroughly discussed in scholarship.[59] While Ira Lapidus has mentioned classical *adab* as "a Muslim anthropology of a man",[60] Francis Robinson has placed in the context of the Farangī Mahallī "family adab", which focused on the effectiveness of transmitting the essentials of Muslim life, the practice of mysticism, and the continuous invocation of ancestral biographies to gain religious inspiration and moral direction.[61] Moral behaviour as both a subject of debate and a method of identifying worth persisted in *Madīnah*.[62]

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[57] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World* (New York: Columbia UP, 2012), 315.; Henriette Sender, *The Kashmiri Pandits: A Study of Cultural Choice in North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 114-123.

[58] Muhammad Husain Azad, *Ab-E Hayat: Shaping the Canon of Urdu Poetry*, eds. F. W. Pritchett and S. R. Faruqi, trans. F. W. Pritchett and S. R. Faruqi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[59] *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (London: University of California Press, 1984).

[60] Ira Lapidus, "Knowledge, Virtue, and Action: The Classical Muslim Conception of Adab and the Nature of Religious Fulfillment in Islam," in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (London: University of California Press, 1984), 39.; Francis Robinson, *The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 155-6.; Francis Robinson, "The Ulama of Farangi Mahall and their Adab," in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara D. Metcalf (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984), 164-167.

[61] Francis Robinson, *The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall*, 155-6.

[62] Several words were used in *Madīnah* to signify cultivation, morality, and distinction as a class signifier. Other words appeared often as well in *Madīnah*: the term *qumāsh* signified manners and style. The word *sanat*, of course, referred to tradition as the practices of the Holy Prophet. Another Urdu term used in *Madīnah*, *salīqah*, signified good manners, etiquette, and expert house keeping. The term *tahzīb* signified courtesy, polish, refinement, and culture. *Mutamaddin* signified a civilized or cultured person. Standing in contrast to culture, manners, and disposition of the *ashrāf* were the words designating sin, disobedience to social norms, or otherwise questionable activities. These

The term *ashrāf* stood in opposition to the *ajlaf*, or lower status groups.[63] Many studies in recent years have shed light on the impact of the rural and urban poor in early twentieth-century India.[64] These studies have added important texture to the political and economic transformations concomitant with two World Wars and waves of nationalist activities, and the role of the poor in those transformations. This study does not deny the impact of the urban poor or the presence of common economic, political, and social interests between the "upper" and "lower" classes. While it is beyond the scope of this study to thoroughly explore the shifting boundaries between the *ashrāf* and *ajlaf* reflected in this period, awareness of this plasticity is a crucial aspect of the social milieu of the early twentieth century.

The *ashrāf*, precisely because of their self-designated as well as externally perceived role as voices of privilege and authority (regardless of whether that privilege was mirrored in monetary terms) were able not only to participate in mass demonstrations against the British and engage in collective action, but were able also to negotiate the terms of their "communal identity" through the use of Indian language newspapers and literature. The British government engaged in close surveillance of Indian language newspapers via newspaper subscription and telegraph. Designations of education, land-ownership, and dissemination of written communication remained the benchmarks for political influence.

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terms included *kabīrah*, *'aib* (sin or blemish), *qubih* (bad, ugliness, deformity, ugliness). *Makhtar'ah* meant innovation.

63 Imtiaz Ahmad, "The Ashraf-Ajlaf Dichotomy in Muslim Social Structure in India," *Indian Economic Social History Review* Vol. 3 (1966), 268-78.

64 Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).; M.D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India: A Study of the Bombay Cotton Mills, 1854-1947* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965).; Mark Holmström, *Industry and Inequality: The Social Anthropology of Indian Labour* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984).

For secular Muslims, literacy and institutional education, gained typically at Aligarh, were keys to unlocking the door to status and influence.[65] For the Muslims who edited, contributed to, and read *Madīnah*, while education at Aligarh was not unusual, secularization was frowned upon. *Qasbah* newspapers demonstrated the growth of a divide between the secularized *ashrāf* and an increasingly crystallized version of social status associated with both the *qasbah* environment and Islam.

Qasbah as an urban category

The Indian *qasbah* has often stood on the margins of urban, intellectual history. Despite the fact that many of the most prominent cultural and political figures of the early twentieth century were products of *qasbah*s,[66] the particular cultural impact of *qasbah*s on early twentieth century culture and politics has only recently found a voice. The importance of the *qasbah* and other borderline urban-rural environments in this discussion is paramount. Scholarship existing on the Urdu public, facilitated by print, has focused on publications originating in large cities, overlooking the wide circulation of *qasbah*-based Urdu publications during the non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement and beyond. Of these *qasbah*-based publications, *Madīnah* offered a connection to Indo-Persianate tradition, analysis of developing reformist movements, and access to a burgeoning regional political identity at the turn of the century.

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[65] David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1978).

[66] Vilayat Ali, of Bara Banki, was close with the 'Ali brothers and member of the Congress Committee and the Muslim League; as Robinson has noted, he was both "the hub of Muslim politics in Bara Banki" and "regularly contributed to the *Comrade* and to *New Era* under the pen-name of 'Bambooque."; Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims 1860-1923*, 365-366.

The compelling attraction of the *qasbah* as spiritual heartland and ancestral home remains for many contemporary Indians and Pakistanis.[67] In the early twentieth century the *ashrāf* in *qasbah*s formed self-conscious communities that, while heterogeneous, were nevertheless linked by kinship ties, education methods using local madrasahs, and increasingly, access to common media sources. *Ashrāf qasbatī*s had a particular motivation to use newspapers to communicate with members who had migrated beyond the physical boundaries of the *qasbah*, and as a method to advocate a particularly Muslim worldview. *Madīnah's* framework for this worldview rested on the contributions of so-called "apolitical" 'ulama educated at a variety of madrasahs across the region. It also depended on political and social issues influencing Muslims. As an exemplar, *Madīnah* acted as a forum for both lay Muslims and diversely-educated 'ulama. The increasingly self-conscious voice of the *qasbah* newspaper, illustrated in this thesis through the example of *Madīnah*, contributed to the construction of an Urdu public that sought to preserve Islam in both personal and political life, in the process defining the emerging boundary between the two spheres.

Any analysis focusing on the colonial period in South Asia must grapple with the many questions raised by the issue of "modernity" in a colonial setting. This study is no exception. The out-dated post-Enlightenment approach to modernity as a measure of "progress" has given way to global views of history. In fact, in the contemporary context, modernity often equates to the confluence of domestic and global "cultural flows."[68] Linear, teleological discussions, which apply the Enlightenment model of evolution to post-colonial

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[67] Mushirul Hasan, "Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity," in *A Leaf Turns Yellow: The Sufis of Awadh*, ed. Muzaffar Ali (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 110.
[68] Carol Breckenridge, *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, ed. Carol Breckenridge (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995), viii.

nations, risk excluding important threads of history repressed as a result of their variance with general trends.[69] In the same way, an overweening emphasis on confluence with the global context risks eliding crucial local difference. Advocating the nation (as opposed to the East/West dichotomy) as the appropriate context for discussions of modernity, studies of South Asian modernity highlights the importance of ambiguity.[70] This is in keeping with Anderson's argument for the importance of the nation as the measure of "modern" legitimacy; it is unclear, however, to what extent the Urdu public qualifies as a sub-nationalism or nationalism under this rubric. The plasticity of the Urdu public in this period recommends Rahman's approach, emphasizing the importance of narrowing our focus from that of the nation-state, which in the case of pre-Partition India is prone to generalizations, to consider the local environment as our "unit of analysis."[71] The dialogue of modernity, certainly in the case of Bijnor *qasbah*, was not the result of unilateral influence emanating from the city, but instead was the product of continued interactions between the *qasbah*, the city, and the colonial state. *Madīnah* newspaper was one of the main channels through which Bijnor's *ashrāf* channelled, translated, and broadcast conceptions of modernity to the local and national context. Throughout this conversation, the central role of the *qasbah* in Muslims' identity, in Bijnor and across the UP, remained consistent even as its specific definition and manifestations transformed with time.

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[69] For a comparative discussion of China and India's adoption of post-Enlightenment narratives, resulting in incomplete histories, see: Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995), 40-85.
[70] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (London: U of Minnesota P, 1996).; Partha Chatterjee, *Our Modernity* (Rotterdam: SEPHIS and CODESRIA, 1997).
[71] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*.

Chapter Summaries

This thesis offers new insights into the character of the Urdu public between 1912 and 1924 through the lens of Urdu newspapers based in *qasbah*s, which reflected the overlapping importance of issues related to geography, religious knowledge, politics, and gender. In the process, shafts of light fall on the world of the *qasbah,* the *ashrāf*, and reformist Muslim men in early twentieth century India.

The second chapter of this thesis describes the significance of the *qasbah* as a particular feature of the Indian urban landscape, a category that defies homogeneity while its members share some common features. The section goes on to introduce a particular North Indian *qasbah* network emanating from the tiny *qasbah* Bijnor, the birthplace of several small Urdu language newspapers (including *Madīnah)* in the early twentieth century. Bijnor *qasbah*, although small in population and long isolated from railway networks, remained connected to a vast kinship and education network of *qasbahs* spanning North India. Discussion of the Sufi tradition of Gogā Pīr common in Bijnor and surrounding districts demonstrate further Bijnor *qasbah*'s isolation from mainstream spiritual networks such as the Chishti. This section also highlights the intersection between local, "municipal" concerns and national priorities in Bijnor and other *qasbah*s in North India.

The third chapter introduces the Urdu newspaper conversation of the early twentieth century, with an emphasis on publications based in *qasbah*s. *Madīnah*'s place in the vibrant Urdu newspaper discourse of the early twentieth century takes centre stage, contextualized among several other *qasbah*-based newspapers and publications in urban centres. This section also includes an introduction to Majīd Hasan, the proprietor of

Madīnah from its inception in 1912, and the series of editors who built the publication from its humble beginnings. A small editorial team contributed most of the unattributed content for each issue, with external contributors receiving authorial attribution. By capitalizing on its striking calligraphy, *Madīnah* transformed its dependence on lithographic printing methods for the first decades of its existence into a selling point. In doing so, *Madīnah* capitalized on the *qasbah* context as a repository of *ashrāf* social status identity.

The fourth chapter captures how *Madīnah* reflected a crystallization process within the *ashrāf* of *qasbah*s and urban centres alike, regarding the relationship between religious identity, Urdu, and social status. The newspaper emphasized its links with *ta'alīmyāftah* and *ashrāf* elements of society. In the 1910's, *Madīnah* shifted from an alliance with the old guard of the All-India Muslim League, which demonstrated strong sympathies with *zamindar* interests, to sympathy with the Indian National Congress. Later, *Madīnah* reluctantly accepted the alliance between Congress and the All-India Muslim League during the Khilafat Movement. The development of *Madīnah*'s sometimes contradictory and ambiguous political biases demonstrates the paper's continued emphasis on providing a forum, able both to accommodate diverse views and respond quickly to the changing political context. This chapter makes mention of ambiguities in attitudes toward Hindus, the West, and the Muslim League retained during coverage of the Khilafat Movement and non-cooperation. This hesitancy, characterized by suspicion of cow-slaughter bans, Gandhi, and Muslim League leadership generally, did not negate the newspaper's whole-hearted support for the non-cooperation and Khilafat movements. Instead ideological tensions among *qasbah*-based newspapers, born of local tensions as well as national realities, demonstrates a persistent concern with community loyalty even during a golden period of

cooperation between Congress and the Muslim League.

The fifth chapter looks at the expanding geographic horizon of *qasbah*-based newspapers as a source of curiosity and wonder as well as pragmatism. Using *Madīnah* newspaper as a lens, this section demonstrates that approaches to novel technologies and expanded international horizons were not limited to the binary measure of pragmatic adoption or principled opposition to modernity in the *qasbah* context. In the liminal space left between these two approaches emerges the genuine amazement of novelty, revealed by the ways in which papers applied European models and "foreign" designations to increase the attractiveness of products and ideas.

The sixth chapter situates the *qasbah* conversation regarding *ashrāf* reformists' attitudes toward women, focusing on the women's section of *Madīnah* newspaper, also called *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. Gender ventriloquism, a common practice in the early twentieth century, in the women's newspaper revealed an approach to inhabiting the women's voice significant beyond its uses as a pragmatic reformist tool. *Madīnah* demonstrates a flexible, accommodating approach to women's issues characterized by a fascination with previously cloistered aspects of the female experience.

This and the next chapter lay the crucial foundation for understanding the world of the *qasbah*-based Urdu newspaper, here understood through the filter of Bijnor and *Madīnah*. The following four chapters investigate this social universe through the angles of religion, gender, and geography. Linked by language, this imagined community interacted meaningfully with various, intersecting matrices of social identity. In providing a forum for Muslim *ashrāf*, *Madīnah* and other *qasbah*-based newspapers left behind a record of a distinctive set of voices grappling with issues of fundamental significance to personal and

social identity. This tributary of the Urdu public, contrary to general belief, remained elastic, responsive to local trends, and politically aware. This work explores the space available for new cultural insights into Muslim political and social activism through the reading of Urdu newspapers. As one of many significant examples in need of investigation, *Madīnah* speaks from the pulpit of the *qasbah*, the physical and spiritual geography of which were significant to early twentieth century readers. The *qasbah* newspaper lends insight into a public whose shifting boundaries not only revealed persistent anxieties about moral behaviour and worldly success, but also a fascination with the novelties such shifts exposed.

Chapter 2:

The Gentrified *Qasbah*

The *qasbah* merits consideration as a distinctive category of urban life in the early twentieth century. Scholarship in urban studies has tended to assume a binary relationship between urban and rural life, encouraged by the Gandhian conception of the village as the Indian heartland, and the city as an externally imposed Western convention.[1] In a recent turn in urban studies of South Asia, scholarship has increasingly considered the differing impact of first and second-tier cities, focusing on colonial perceptions of the city as inhabiting a racial duality.[2] Other views have emphasized the city's overweening influence on the development of religious thought at the margins of urban life.[3] Research on *qasbahs* has for the most part, however, fallen by the wayside in this shift toward urban studies.[4] Interest in the category of urban life encompassed by the term *qasbah* in South Asia has remained limited to cultural historians of South Asian Islam, focusing almost exclusively on its contribution to intellectual, rather than political and cultural, life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[5] The *qasbah* as a significant urban, social category has

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[1] Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).; Eric Lewis Beverley, "Colonial Urbanism and South Asian Cities," *Social History* 36, no. 4 (2007), 483-484.

[2] Sandip Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay City 1900-1925* (Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2007).; Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*; Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

[3] Janel L. Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City - Historic Myth, Islamic Essence and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 2 (1987), 156.; Cited in: Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 872.

[4] Beverley's recent, rich historiography of urban studies makes little mention of the *qasbah* as an urban category in the recent flood of scholarship related to the urban environment in South Asia.; Eric Beverley, "Colonial Urbanism and South Asian Cities," *Social History* 36, no. 4 (2007): 483-484.

[5] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 6, 128. For studies discussing *qasbah*s' contribution to education, see: Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's*

suffered partly from the difficulty defining the term. Rich possibilities exist in relating the recent flood of scholarship on the urban environment to the *qasbah* context, however.

The *qasbah*, having grown from its origins as a market town and regional centre for agricultural areas, had strong roots in agriculture.[6] Many prominent Muslim *qasbatī*s derived their influence from land ownership; their political activism owed much to their agricultural interests.[7] Agriculture provided the main source of livelihood for residents of the Bijnor *parganah* and *tahsil*. In the early twentieth century, the main crops were rice, wheat, barley, bajra, and gram.

At the same time, the *qasbah ashrāf*, as landowners and local administrators in the district, demonstrated translocal links to intellectual traditions and political movements otherwise associated with the urban environment.[8] The early twentieth century *qasbah* was neither purely rural, due to its tendency to emphasize literacy in education and in its vibrant engagement with central political developments via newspaper, nor purely urban, as a result of its spatial segregation from the colonial-dominated city.

Margrit Pernau has demonstrated how definitions of the urban environment in the Delhi context contributed to the emergence of a territorial identity, not just in an

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Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).; Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, 125-37.; Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India*.; Robinson, *The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia*.

[6] C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012).

[7] e.g. Munshi Ehtesham Ali (Kakori); Syed Nabiullah (Kara); Hasrat Mohani (Mohan); Rafi Ahmed Kidwai (Masauli); Abdur Rahman Bijnori (Bijnor); Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari (Yusufpur); Abdul Aziz Ansari (Bara Banki); Maulvi Syed Iltifat Rasul (Jalalpur); Hasan Amad Madani (Deoband). Names found in: Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims 1860-1923*, 365-415.

[8] Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh*, 213-25.

oppositional sense, but also as an internally focused process.[9] Sandip Hazareesingh's work has pointed out how early twentieth century Bombay became "an authorized space for contesting and negotiating the colonial present and possibly political futures of South Asia."[10] Hazareesingh's work also points out the intimate connection between the development of the newspaper and the new language of "civic rights" centred on the category of urban life.[11] In a similar way, Bijnor *qasbah* employed a similar language of civic engagement through the language of *Madīnah*. Bijnor's tendency to ally with a-political Muslim scholarship set it apart from the secular turn of the Muslim League in the 1920's and 30's.

Separate from the major centres of political activity in the early twentieth century, the *qasbah*'s association with significant Muslim minorities sets it apart from Gandhian rural ideology. At the same time, conversations regarding the urban environment of the twentieth century, characterized by the influence of Delhi, Lucknow, and Bombay, also prioritize different concerns than the *qasbah* generally, and Bijnor specifically. The *qasbah* newspapers of Bijnor and other small towns delineated civic duties and weighed in on national level debates, while printing issues from the relatively isolated environment of the *qasbah*. *Madīnah* and Bijnor's narratives were in conversation with each other during the years between 1912 and 1924, shaping local and national perceptions of what it meant to be a Muslim in the urban context while speaking to specific *qasbah* concerns.

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[9] Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth-Century Delhi*, 154.
[10] Sandip Hazareesingh, "Colonial Modernism and the Flawed Paradigms of Urban Renewal: Uneven Development in Bombay, 1900-25," *Urban History* 28, no. 2 (2001), 235-255.; Quoted in: Eric Lewis Beverley, "Colonial Urbanism and South Asian Cities," *Social History* 36, no. 4 (2011), 482-497.
[11] Sandip Hazareesingh, "The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay City, 1905-1925" (PhD. diss., University of Warwick), 81-90.

In the early 1980's Thomas Metcalf, C.A. Bayly and Barbara Metcalf shone the spotlight on the *qasbah* context as a category of urban life located near villages and attractive to early Sufi devotional figures, before their significance as market towns for agricultural goods attracted government administration and patronage.[12] In the last three decades, while much scholarship has made mention of the *qasbah* as a significant player in nineteenth and twentieth century economic and intellectual life,[13] there have been only a few attempts to examine this particular category of urban life in the context of South Asia as a whole.[14] Looking at the category of the *qasbah* through the lens of a newspaper publication lends us access to both the lofty and mundane elements of the conversation occurring between early twentieth century *ashrāf* Muslims living in both *qasbah*s and cities. In *Madīnah* newspaper, the *qasbah* emerges as not only the birthplace of prominent Indian Muslims in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but also as a locality which engaged with political trends distinctively. Bijnor's *Madīnah* defined the *qasbah* environment increasingly against the "Westernized" city, engaging in what Justin Jones calls in Amroha "a constant process of negotiation between broader, standardized agendas and local distinctiveness."[15] *Madīnah* transcended the binary opposition of the urban and rural, however; when it emphasized its exceptional nature it did not do so reflexively, but

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[12] Thomas Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and LA: U of California P, 1979).; Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870*, 346-368; Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, 63.

[13] Anand Yang, *Bazaar India* (London: U of California P, 1998).; Peter Reeves, *Landlords and Governments in Uttar Pradesh: A Study of their Relations Until Zamindari Abolition* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1991).

[14] For studies the prove an exception to this trend, see: Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh*; Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 871-908; Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*.

[15] Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 871-908.

in order to garner and maintain credibility in a political and intellectual context, where the geographic horizon was rapidly expanding.

*Qasbah*s were not an exclusively North Indian phenomenon. On the contrary, according to Rahman, *qasbah*s flourished from the seventeenth century in Punjab, Gujurat, Malwa, Deccan, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Kashmir.[16] Those *qasbah*s based in the UP benefited from their proximity to Delhi, in terms of Mughal patronage and ease of access to the state centre.[17] Those *qasbah*s in UP which have benefited from the light of scholarship include Deoband,[18] Amroha,[19] Bara Banki,[20] Rudauli, Bilgram, Budaun,[21] and Sihali.[22] In North India, UP remained the space in which Muslim identity figured centrally in political life.[23]

As well as being one of the only districts in UP where Muslims comprised at least a 35% minority (the other being Moradabad)[24] in the first half of the twentieth century, Bijnor has escaped notice. The last of the UP district headquarters to be connected to the railroad in 1930, and its publications continually denigrated in colonial sources as

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[16] Rahman has provided this list of locations, with a detailed bibliography of references to *qasbahs* in these areas. Selected citations include, for Punjab: Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, First ed. (Oxford: Princeton UP, 2002), 125.; For Gujurat, see: *Urbanization in Western India: Historical Perspective*, ed. Makrand Mehta (Ahmedabad: Gujurat UP, 1988), 73-77.; for Malwa, see: Norbert Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003), 96-98.; For Rajasthan, see: Shail Mayaram, *Against History, Against State: Counterperspectives from the Margins* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).; for Bihar, see: Yang, *Bazaar India*; For the Deccan see: Burton Stein, *Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1989), 75. For complete list of references see: Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 4.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*.

[19] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 63-85.; Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 871-908.

[20] Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh*.

[21] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 63-85.

[22] Jamal Malik, *Islamische gelehrtenkultur in Nordindien*, Vol. 19. Brill, 1997.

[23] Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims 1860-1923*, 1-5.

[24] Ibid., 12.

"bigoted" and its public figures of little importance,[25] Bijnor and *Madīnah* nevertheless sustained a central connection to central political and cultural movements of the early twentieth century.

Madīnah newspaper expressed a voice of Muslim gentry or *ashrāf*, thinly spread across North Indian *qasbah*s and urban centres. Although *Madīnah* was not read widely within Bijnor *qasbah* itself initially, by the early 1920's its considerable influence had extended to include Bijnor, Punjab, and UP.[26] The history of *qasbah*s in the early twentieth century context offers a clearer understanding of the social dynamics that influenced the Muslim *ashrāf* both in Bijnor and beyond. The *qasbah* context offers a particular perspective on North Indian history, which until recently has gone largely unexplored. This chapter establishes the importance of the *qasbah* context through primary resource analysis and a review of secondary literature on Indian *qasbah*s, before going on to discuss how the Bijnor context sheds new light on the *sharīf* Muslim population.

Qasbah Culture: Background

The *qasbah* is an elusive concept in South Asia, signifying both a literal, physical space where concentrated populations of Muslims have lived alongside Hindus, as well as an abstract universe where spiritual and temporal identity rotates on the fulcrum of traditional Indo-Persian, and in some cases Islamic, values. With no direct English equivalent, the word *qasbah* refers to a settlement in which the *ashrāf*, an elite social group

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[25] H. R. Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer* (Allahabad: Government Press, 1908), 185.; Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces during 1912* (Simla: Government Central Branch Press, 1913).

[26] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces during 1912* (Simla: Government Central Branch Press, 1926, 1930, 1936).

dominated by government servants, soldiers, scholars, and Sufis, came to enjoy dominance as feudal landowners. On the other hand, *qasbah* society also included labourers, manufacturers, and artisans who provided services to each other and the landed gentry. [27] *Sharīf* Indians, descended from the *ashrāf*, who often migrated from their ancestral *qasbah* to other cities in India or abroad nevertheless retained a sense of community centred on the *qasbah*. The importance of *qasbah* associations has been manifest in appellations such as "Bijnori" or "Amrohavi" at the end of names. *Qasbatīs* forced to leave the ancestral home to seek education or professional opportunity identified with their origins through their names, just as they might eat traditional foods like *qorma* or *kitchṛī* as reminders of their birthplace.[28] Despite the closely knitted familial ties characterizing the *qasbah* landscape, those communities contributed a large number of students to the reformist educational institution Aligarh University.[29] Among these students, many retained their allegiance to familial ties based in *qasbah*s, despite an education that emphasized alliance with vocational expertise in a colonial framework. Much more recently, social media reflects the importance of these *qasbah* networks in cyberspace. For instance, at least one Facebook group has cropped up commemorating Bijnor's Sayyid family, based in Bahnera *qasbah*.[30]

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[27] Hasan, *Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity*, 110.
[28] Hosh Bilgrami (Nawab Hosh Yar Jung Bahadur), *Mushahidat* (Hyderabad, 1960), 3.; Yildirim, Sajjad Hyder, K.A. Nizami (ed.), *Armughan-i Aligarh* (Aligarh, 1974), 150.; Cited in Ibid.-111.
[29] Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 891.
[30] "Bhanera Sadaat Tarikhi Azadari (bijnor uttar pradesh (sic))," Facebook, accessed 19 July 2013, https://www.facebook.com/BhaneraSadatTarikhiAzadariBijnorUttarPardesh.

Facebook Group Profile for Sayyids of Bijnor District



While *qasbah*s exist in various corners of the Muslim world – particularly North Africa and the Middle East – the type of settlement the word signifies, as well as its symbolic power, varies according to regional context. Commonly used in North Africa to describe the quarters of a city where native Arabs live,[31] the word *qasbah* derives from the Arabic root meaning "to divide, cut up." The same root contributes to words in contemporary Arabic meaning "city, town" or "citadel." References to *qasbah*s first emerged in South Asian texts in the sixteenth-century, when Abū Fazl described them as small towns under Mughal-controlled provinces. Muslims who claimed origins in the Middle East and Central Asia settled in North India and other regions from the eleventh century, gradually imbuing previously non-Muslims settlements with Islamic influence.[32]

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[31] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 31.
[32] Ibid., 3.

Muhgal servants and Muslim migrants interacted with upper-caste Hindu kinship groups that also benefited from government patronage, contributing to the creation of a flexible, elite group based in the *qasbah*.

*Qasbah*s are not exclusive to North India. While the largest concentration of *qasbahs* appeared in the north, they also became fixtures of small-scale urban life across the central and northeastern subcontinent.[33] *Qasbatī ashrāf*, descended from educated Muslim migrants, successfully garnered state patronage from the Mughal Empire and cultivated a sense of exclusive identity through sponsorship of religious festivals, architecture, and art. North Indian *qasbah*s tended to cluster near Delhi, Lucknow, and Faizabad - all major urban centres of power during the Mughal period. Endogamy and attention to genealogy records contributed to a sense of exclusivity among *qasbatī ashrāf*. At the same time, this exclusive identity signifier remained subject to fluctuations in status and prosperity across generations.

Scholarship has attempted to define the South Asian *qasbah* in a number of ways. One perspective refers to the *qasbah* as a "market town," larger than a village but surrounded by agricultural producers that travelled to the town regularly to exchange goods.[34] This definition tends to prioritize the *qasbah* as an economic entity, dominated by the agricultural context. To this end, the word "kasbah" appears in several colonial-era glossaries, referring to a small settlement serving as a market for a particular district. The *ganj* and the *qasbah* often appear as synonyms in these sources, although their origins and

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[33] Ibid., 4.

[34] James Heitzman, *The City in South Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 99.; Manasori Sato, *Economy and Polity of Rajasthan: Study of Kota and Marwar*, eds. Manasori Sato and B.L. Bhadani (Jaipur: Publication Scheme, 1997), 2-3.

affiliations to Mughal, and afterward colonial, power differed.[35]

Colonial documents necessarily focused on *qasbah*s as economic and administrative units.[36] Descendants of *zamindar*s and *taluqdar*s dating from the Mughal period retained their land rights under the British, who viewed landed ownership as a mark of leadership.[37] As a result, British records of Vernacular Newspapers tended to emphasize the influence of landed newspaper editors who boasted landed wealth over publishers who could not claim links to Mughal or British state patronage.[38] Anxieties regarding the sustainability of the local economy, particularly related to the impact of railway construction on manufacturing, artisanal work, and agriculture, also influenced *qasbah*s' interaction with urban India. Perhaps in connection to this, *qasbah* culture often defined itself as the antithesis to the city environment and its "chicanery, hypocrisy and competitive spirit."[39] The *qasbah* formed the first level of urban life in a predominantly agricultural context; it also served as the home of administrators, scholars, and Sufis who simultaneously remained separate from the city context and sought to influence it.[40]

The *qasbah*s' administrative role was paramount.[41] Under the Mughal Empire, the word *qasbah* became a term signifying a unit of administration; this usage was adopted popularly into Urdu.[42] Under the Mughal Empire, districts were separated into *parganah*s,

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35 Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century*.
36 Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 31-37.
37 Ibid.
38 Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces during the Year 1912*.
39 Bilgrami, Maulvi Abdul Haq. *Maasir al-Ikram* (Hyderabad, 1910). Paraphrased in Hasan, *Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity*, 108.
40 Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 2.
41 "The *qasbah*s are almost universally the headquarters of parganas, and from them the pargana used to be administered under the native rule." *Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh*, Vol. 11 (Lucknow: Oudh Government Press, 1877-1878), 312.
42 Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 31-37.

of which *qasbah*s served as capital cities. British officials later adopted *qasbah*s as capitals of *tahsils*, local units created to enable efficient administration. *Qasbah*s often served as centres for revenue collectors, magistrates, and other colonial officials.[43] Several settlements qualifying as *qasbah*s could exist in a single *parganah*, however.[44]

For the purposes of this study, a *qasbah* is a settlement between 5,000 and 35,000 people in size, boasting at least a significant Muslim minority if not a majority, along with a large Hindu population. Its social life was characterized by syncretic religious traditions as well as the presence of a strong Indo-Persian culture among the *ashrāf* social status group, which included landowners, government administrators, taluqdars, Sufis, and 'ulama. This *qasbah* culture, which solidified in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, was characterized by an emphasis on education in the Urdu vernacular and Persian as well as an ethos of Islam-influenced citizenship, which was pragmatically syncretic at the local level.

There has been a recent movement in scholarship to reverse the trend, present since scholarship of the colonial period, to focus on large cities as the repository of Indian urban identity.[45] Recent scholarship by Justin Jones, Raisur Rahman and Mushirul Hasan has done well to challenge post-industrial assumptions about the relative importance of large urban areas by contextualizing the rise of *qasbah* culture in the political developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, namely the decline of the Mughal

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[43] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 214-217.
[44] Manasori Sato and B.L. Bhadani, *Economy and Polity of Rajasthan: Study of Kota and Marwar* (Jaipur: Publication Scheme, 1997), 2-3.
[45] C.A. Bayly, "The Small Town and Islamic Gentry in North India: The Case of Kara," in *The City in South Asia: Pre-Modern and* Modern, eds. Kenneth Ballhatchet and John Harrison (London: Curzon, 1980).

Empire and its princely states followed by the rise of nationalism.[46] Justin Jones has devoted research to Amroha, whose application of Islamic reformist ideas shaped according to local realities via a vibrant discourse, rather than through a wholesale adoption of externally imposed beliefs.[47] Rahman's account emphasizes the vibrant, unique culture that characterized four separate *qasbahs,* as well as links that tied many of the *qasbah*s together. Mushirul Hasan's work focuses on the Kidwai Shaikhs in Awadh, with a focus on the pluralism that defined their political identity in the lead-up to independence. His book, while limited to the history of a single kinship group, describes religious rituals, celebrations, "inter-community relations" and mundane routines specific to the *qasbah* environment.[48] Both Jones and Hasan point out interconnections between *qasbah*s, cemented by marriage.

Bijnor's Legacy

Bijnor, too long overlooked, has produced figures of towering influence in the cultural history of South Asian Islam. One of the most prominent literary critics of the twentieth century, 'Abdur Rahman Bijnori, came from Bijnor *qasbah*.[49] A contemporary of Iqbal, he was born in Bijnor *qasbah* of the then-United Provinces, one of the settling places for the Rohilkhand Baloch. He attended a madrasah in Bijnor before attending Aligarh

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[46] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 2.; Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh*.
[47] Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 871-908.
[48] Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh*, 5.
[49] "Prominent Alumni: Aligarh Muslim University," Aligarh Muslim University website, accessed 8 November 2013, http://www.amu.ac.in/pdf/Alumni.pdf.; "Karachi: Connoisseurs remember Bijnor's contribution," Dawn Website, accessed 8 November 2013, http://dawn.com/news/5261/karachi-connoisseurs-remember-bijnori.

Muslim University to receive his B.A. and L.L.B. During his short life (he died at the age of 33, in 1918), he went on to master Arabic, Persian, English, and German before writing a doctoral thesis on Islamic Jurisprudence. His adulatory masterpiece, *Mahasin-i-Kalam-i-Ghālib* (or "Beauties of Ghalib's Poetry") remains an influential commentary on Ghalib's poetry and life, still featuring in syllabi of Urdu literature courses in Pakistan and India.[50] In fact, Bijnori's study, along with Hali's *Yādgār-i Ghālib*, has been credited with establishing Ghalib as "representative of the classical tradition" in the twentieth century.[51] *Madīnah* printed a poem in the form of a *marsīyah*, or ritualistic mourning poem, often used for *mātam*, celebrating 'Abdur Rahman's creative output as representative of the Muslim community.[52]

Contemporary literary powerhouses also lay claim to ancestral roots in Bijnor district. The head of Oxford University Press, Pakistan, Amina Syed, was born in Nehtaur *qasbah* in Bijnor, less than 30 km distant from Bijnor *qasbah*. She is cousin to Urdu novelist Qurratulain Haider, whose father Sajjad Haider Yildirim was a prominent government servant and intellectual raised in Nehtaur before attending Aligarh, in which city

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[50] Syed Nomanul Haq, *Mahasin-e Kalam-e Ghalib* (Lahore: Oxford UP Pakistan 2012).; "Syllabus – M.A (Urdu) Part II," Punjab University Patiala Urdu faculty website, accessed 8 November 2013, punjabiuniversity.ac.in/syllabi.; "Syllabus of Urdu (Optional). B.A. IIIrd year," Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University faculty website, last modified June 2011, accessed 8 November 2013, http://srtmun.ac.in/Syllabus/Urdu-BAThird%20Year%20(SemesterPattern).pdf.

[51] *Handbook of Twentieth-Century Literatures of* India, ed. Nalini Natarajan (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 338.

[52] "*fidā-yi qaum kā mātam: y'anī, qaṭ'a-hi tārīkh vafāt-o-'usrat-e āyāt... be-akṛ 'Abd-ur Rahman Sāhib Bijnorī marhūm"* [Mourning for the Decline of the Community: or a stanza from the account of the death and decline of the self-effacing, late 'Abdur Rahman Bijnori]. *Madīnah*, 25 February/1 March, 1919.

Qurratulain was born.[53] Qurratulain Haider's writings express awareness of the publication *Madīnah* as a result of her familial connection to the district.[54]

More generally, Bijnor district's Sayyids were connected through familial ties with networks across Amroha, Moradabad, and Muzaffarnagar.[55] Bijnor's Sayyids, originally tracing their ancestry to Bukhara, part of the then-Persian Empire (it is now located in modern-day Uzbekistan), established what would become an ancestral home in Bahnera village of Bijnor district. The original migrant from Bukhara was a Sufi by the name of Shah 'Ilm-ud-din, who, as many Sufis did, claimed a direct connection to the lineage of the Prophet.[56] The Bahnera Sayyids were the kinship group of Bibi Ashraf, the subject of C.M. Naim's article "How Bibi Ashraf Learned to Write," which provides insight into the norms of *qasbah* life in Bahnera, Bijnor.[57] In 1901 Bahnera was a tiny qasbah of only 2,582 people, with a Muslim population of 1,561.[58] Bibi Ashraf's father, Syed Fateh Hussain, left his family behind in order to travel to Agra and then Gwalior to pursue a career as a lawyer. Bibi Ashraf's husband and second cousin, Syed Alamdar Hussain, had been raised in Bahnera before becoming a deputy inspector of schools in Jullundur District, Punjab.[59] After being let go from that position for reasons unknown, he took his family to Lucknow. Although Syed Fateh Hussain's father may have disapproved of his son's choice of profession, he

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[53] Francis Robinson, email message to author, 18 October 2013.
[54] Qurratulain Haider, *The Sound of Falling Leaves*, trans. Qurratulain Haider (Delhi: Sahita Akademi, 2007).; Qurratulain Haider, *River of Fire*, trans. Qurratulain Haider (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998).
[55] Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 876.
[56] Syed Hassain Fazal Naqvi. *tārīkh-o-insāf gulshan-i sādāt bhanaiṛah* [The history and system of jurisprudence of the rose-garden of the Bhanairah Saadat], (Delhi: Saloni Publications, approx. 2006).; Sayed Shoiab Naqvi, personal communication with author, November 2013.
[57] C.M. Naim, "How Bibi Ashraf Learned to Write," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 6 (1987), 99-115.
[58] Ibid., 103.
[59] Ibid., 100.

followed a typical path in migrating from his home *qasbah* in search of employment. Following their marriage, Bibi Ashraf and Syed Alamdar Hussain relocated to Lahore, another popular destination for *qasbatī*s. Syed Alamdar Hussain received an appointment of Assistant Professor of Arabic and Persian at Government College, Lahore. The far-ranging government appointments oriented around the home base of Bahnera are consistent with the habits of a *qasbah* landowning community with patronage links with the government. Information about the Bahnera Syeds helps paint a more complete picture of *qasbah* life in the district of Bijnor, related to the Shi'a rather than the Sunni community. Bahnera Syed lived and worked their significant land holdings (enough in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to provide Bibi Ashraf's father with at least ten servants) within a stone's throw of Bijnor. Bahnera *qasbah* is located 25 km to the northeast of Bijnor *qasbah*.

To provide a modern update on the ways that *qasbah* networks are being maintained, as demonstrated in the above image, the 21st century Bijnor Syeds have a Facebook group entitled "Bahnera Sadaat Tarikhi Azadari," translating as "The Historical Mourning of the Bahnera Syeds or descendants of the Prophet."[60] The page serves primarily as a place to record the performance of Muharram *majālis* or gatherings to mourn the death of Imam Husain, and other acts of commemoration also known as *azādārī*. Among the same group of Sayyids claiming ancestry and/or residence in Bahnera, an owner of a YouTube account named Sajjad 'Ali has posted videos of Muharram rituals such as *mātam*, or physical acts of mourning, including the use of bundles of knives swept onto

[60] "Bhanera Sadaat Tarikhi Azadari (bijnor uttar pradesh (sic))," Facebook, accessed 19 July 2013, https://www.facebook.com/BhaneraSadatTarikhiAzadariBijnorUttarPardesh.

the back in public demonstrations of faithfulness and despondence.[61] Other autobiographies have offered glimpses of the quality of *qasbah* life; Khwaja Ahmad Abbas' autobiography describes the *qasbah* and its *zenana*s in a tone of reverence and nostalgia, as the birthplace of community and spiritual identity.[62]

Bijnor became a hotbed of the Khilafat movement in the 1910's and early 1920's, and later in the independence movement of Congress.[63] *Madīnah*'s reaction to the Balkan Wars traces the development of this burgeoning sense of community among Muslim gentry settled in *qasbah*s across North India. It is this evolving sense of the *ashrāf* self, gradually forging stronger links with Islam, which may have helped lay the foundation for future manifestations of nationalism. Analysing newspaper production in Bijnor *qasbah* provides a unique vantage point into the development of a concept of religious identity and authority among this elite group in the rapidly changing social context.

Bijnor: Origins and History

*Qasbah*s are diverse, heterogeneous categories of urban life, each wielding a distinct impact on the local and national environment. Looking through the filter of Bijnor's specific history and genealogy lends insight into a *qasbah*'s engagement with the Urdu public sphere via newspaper print.

There are conflicting stories explaining the origin of Bijnor, which has traditionally been a part of the Rohilkhand or Bareilly region, a swath of territory east of the Ganges

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[61] This video is graphic. "10 Mohrram Azadari Bhanera Sadat Bijnor u.p. (sic)," Youtube, published 30 November 2012, viewed 9 September 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9mMCzHWCf_CyF-2UjMIVsg?feature=watch>.
[62] Khwaja Abbas, *I am not an Island*, (Delhi: Vikas, 1977), 1-5.
[63] Raisur Rahman, personal conversation with the author, 15 September 2012.

formerly a part of Rohilkhand, and then Rampur. According to legend, Raja Ben, a king mentioned in the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas,* founded Bijnor. Castle mounds dedicated to Raja Ben are scattered in Bijnor and surrounding provinces. Raja Ben, mentioned as a contemporary of Rama in founding narratives, has otherwise appears in the annals of the 13th century.[64] Bijnor's western border is the Ganges, its eastern border a road that borders the foothills of the Himalayas and the Garhwal district. The eastern and western boundaries come to a northern point at Dehradun, while its southern border running along the length of Moradabad and Nainital render Bijnor in a rough triangular shape.[65] Until 1917, when Bijnor became its own district, it formed an extension of Moradabad. Bijnor initially comprised five tahsils: Naginah, Najibabad, Bijnor, Dhampur, and Chandpur. In 1984 the British divided Chandpur between Bijnor and Dhampur, consolidating the district into four tahsils.[66] Bijnor tahsil, hemmed in by the Ganges on the west and the Malin river on the north, included Bijnor *qasbah*, Chandpur, Mandawar, Jhalu, and Haldaur.[67]

The history of Bijnor before the Mughal Empire is unclear. It is likely that Bijnor fell under the control of servants of the Delhi Sultanate, including Nasir-ud-din Mahmud and Ghias-ud-din Balban Bijnor. Bijnor *qasbah* is not mentioned specifically in texts until the '*Ain-i Akbarī*, although a glimpse of the district appears in the writings of the poet Amir Khusro, who wrote that when the Sultan Ala-ud-din Muhammad sent his son, Khizr Khan, to Amroha as punishment he allowed him to use the land between that town and the hills

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[64] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 158.
[65] See Appendices.
[66] According to Mushirul Hasan, "The tahsil is a modern innovation as a local division with fixed boundaries, and, as compared with the pargana, an artificial one. It was simply an arbitrary aggregation of a few parganas, the number of which varied." Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh*, 6.; Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 124-125.
[67] William Stevenson Meyer Sir et al., *Imperial Gazetteer*, New edition ed., Vol. 8 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 201.

(the area known today as Bijnor) as a hunting ground. Located on the edge of the Himalayan hills and abutting the Ganges, Bijnor remained a haven for diverse wildlife. Khusro says that in that area, known for its game, "ten antelope might be killed with a single arrow."[68] This description of Bijnor paints a picture of a district with rich resources in terms of wildlife, agriculture, and therefore taxable revenue.

The best source of information regarding Bijnor in the period before the advent of the English remains '*Ain-i-Akbarī*. Here through detailed fiscal records a fuller picture of the area comes to light. Bijnor formed a section of the *sarkar* of Sambhal and the *subah* (province) of Delhi. Bijnor was divided into 15 *parganahs* then, as now, although the names of some of these have changed over time. The chief town of the district was also named Bijnor. The revenue and taxation figures reveal that the land was highly cultivated and its residents heavily taxed. During the time of Akbar there were no areas with a majority of Muslim *zamindars* in control. Bijnor *parganah*, for instance, was "held" by Tagas and Brahmans although prominent communities included Jats and Shaikhs as well.[69] This was consistent with Akbar's tendency to depend heavily on the heads of Indian-born elite to serve as nobles, including the heads of Rajput clans.

After the conclusion of Akbar's reign, Bijnor continued to be ruled by a deputy from Sambhal (administrators in Bijnor were highly favored and had permanent residences at court). Considering its relative proximity to Delhi, Bijnor remained a prime appointment for loyal servants of the empire; servants' tendency to reside permanently in Delhi, while deputies tended to district administrative duties, pointed to their influence in the imperial centre.

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[68] Ibid., 161-163.
[69] Ibid., 169, 219.

As the Mughal Empire declined in influence, competing interests provoked conflict through raids and military campaigns. As Raisur Rahman notes, "[once] the Mughal Empire declined, smaller kingdoms and principalities took the lead in terms of patronizing the service gentry."[70] The Rohillas, migrants from Afghanistan, sought to provide military service.[71] The Marathas also expressed eagerness to join campaigns in search of military service. Finally, a Qamrkhel Afghan named Najib Khan established a hereditary alliance through a strategic marriage to the Rohilla Dunde Khan. Various campaigns led to his accession to the title of Najib-ud-daula and paymaster of the Imperial Army. [72] His heir Zabita Khan campaigned against the British and the Nawab of Awadh for control of Bijnor. After the death of Najib-ud-daulah in 1771, a scuffle for control of Bijnor commenced, involving the Marathas, Zabita Khan, and Faizullah Khan of Rampur. A coalition force of the East India Company forces and the Nawab of Awadh successfully blockaded Faizullah's forces and drove Zabita Khan to Sahāranpūr where he lived until his death. The Nawab of Awadh took possession of the district (which included modern-day Moradabad) in 1774. By 1797 the Nawab of Awadh, unable to pay his debts for military service, ceded the district to the Company. [73] The Company separated Bijnor from Moradabad in 1817 to form a separate division, then named the northern division of Moradabad.[74] The centre of the new district was Naginah, until in 1824 the collector Mr. N.J. Halhed moved the

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[70] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 4.
[71] Ibid., 172.
[72] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 195.
[73] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everyday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 175.
[74] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 180.

headquarters to Bijnor, possibly in order to place the centre closer to the military station at Meerut.[75] In 1837 the district took on the name of its administrative centre, Bijnor.

During the Uprising of 1857 Bijnor was characterized by a sharp division between Hindus and Muslims in the district and an overthrow of British authority after English administrators and their families fled across the Ganges. The Nawab of Najibabad was charged with the protection of the government and the treasury; after the departure of the English, he promptly took control of both.[76] Only following General Colin Campbell and Brigadier Jones' campaign did Bijnor return to English control. In 1857 Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a local subordinate judge in Bijnor, charged with the management of the government by the Nawab during the uprising. Afterward Khan sent his own account on the causes of the insurrection in the form of a well-known letter to the government in Britain as well as the Government of India.[77] In partial explanation, Khan describes the widespread belief among Indians that the English were intent on undermining indigenous religions, including Islam, in favor of Christianity. In addition, Khan blames the uprising on government's ignorance of matters that concern locals along with its refusal to allow Indian membership on the legislative council. Indians in Bijnor, as well as across India, were both frustrated at the inability to steer the course of their own lives in economic and political matters, and fearful of losing their religious identity by external pressure.

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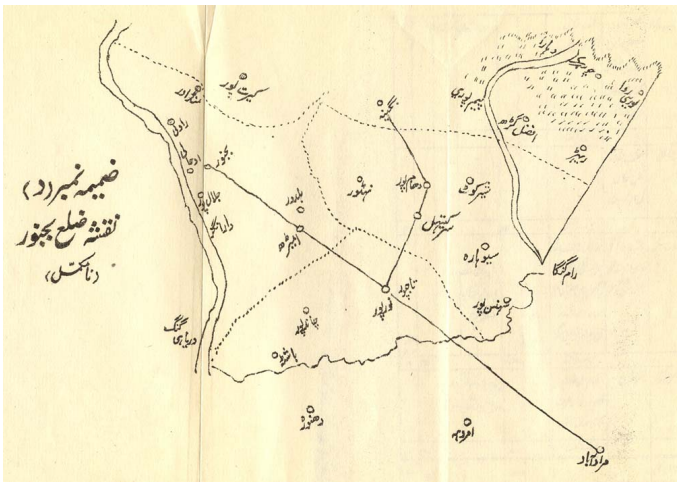
[75] Ibid., 124.
[76] Ibid., 183.; Syed Ahmed Khan, *Tārīkh-i sarkashī-yi zila'-yi Bijnor*, trans. Hafiz Malik and Morris Dembo, (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat Dilli, 1982).
[77] Khan, Sir Syed Ahmed, *Causes of the Indian Revolt: Three Essays*, ed. Salim al-Din Quraishi, (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1997).

Urdu Map of Bijnor, in *Tārīkh-i Sarkashī-yi Zila'-i Bijnor.* c. 1857[78]



Bijnor's proximity to Delhi allowed relatively easy access to the Mughal court while imperial patronage facilitated the development of a distinctive, *qasbah*-based culture in the city. With the final decline of the Mughal Empire and the withdrawal of patronage from Muslims following 1857, *qasbah*s drew administrators, artists, and scholars "to recreate a world in their own image."[79]

After 1857, the 'ulama of Delhi left the city for ancestral *qasbah*s. Disillusioned by the sacking of Delhi and the final disintegration of the Mughal Empire, they fell back on well-maintained familial networks.[80] Barbara Metcalf has mentioned Deoband, Saharanpur, Kandhlah, Gangoh and Bareilly as a few places that experienced an influx of 'ulama in this period.[81] They returned to their ancestral homes as a response to reduced patronage in Delhi. The movement was merely one chapter in a longer trend of migration to and from

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[78] Syed Ahmed Khan, *Tārīkh-i sarkashī-yi zila'-yi Bijnor*, trans. Hafiz Malik and Morris Dembo, (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat Dilli, 1982).
[79] Hasan, *Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity*, 112.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, 73, 76, 82, 85.

*qasbah*s, dating from at least the eighteenth century. Justin Jones has mentioned the *Sayyid*, *Shaikh*, and *Paṭhān* communities' employment of Mughal and colonial service backgrounds to obtain administrative service positions in either the colonial government or in Hyderabad.[82] Kakori residents secured employment at the district headquarters of Lucknow while simultaneously maintaining their roots to the *qasbah*.[83]

For the service gentry, a migratory lifestyle was often mandatory. The Mughal Empire usually rotated local administrators every three years. The colonial government adopted the same model.[84] This peripatetic lifestyle contributed to the constancy of attachment to the ancestral *qasbah*. Keeping this tendency towards migration in mind, scholars' return to ancestral *qasbah*s post-1857 may have been either a temporary measure or an attempt to take advantage of their local connections to re-enter service, since in *qasbah*s the demand for *ashrāf* administrators was still high.

Bijnor *parganah* contained 229 villages, of which the *qasbah* Bijnor was the most prominent.[85] The influence of *zamindārs* in the *parganah* remained significant in the early twentieth century; of 567 areas identified by census-takers, 254 were jointly owned *zamindari* tracts.[86] The British formed the *tahsil* for administrative purposes; each *tahsil* included multiple *parganah*s. Bijnor *tahsil* included the *qasbah*s Bijnor and Chandpur, with the *tahsildar* as well as local magistrates residing in Bijnor *qasbah*.[87] In the first half of the

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[82] Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 876.
[83] Claudia Liebeskind, *Piety on its Knees: Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).
[84] K.G. Subramanayam and Muzaffar Alam, *Writing the Mughal World* (New York: Columbia UP, 2012).
[85] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 218-219.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 221.

twentieth century, the Commissioner of Bareilly, assisted by magistrates and a collector, administered Bijnor district.[88] Because of Bijnor's "unusually large number of towns" administration of municipal areas and local taxation practices dominated British policy. Outside urban areas, an elected district board administered an increasing number of local issues. A municipal board of twelve, founded in 1866, administered local affairs (nine elected and three appointed). The district board was composed of members supplied by local tahsil boards until the Act of 1906, which mandated that all the members be elected directly. [89]

Apart from a significant market in agricultural goods, Bijnor specialized in the production of knives and cutlery made in the suburb Bukhara. Manufacturers in Bijnor also produced sacred threads worn by Brahmans for export across the United Provinces. [90] Mosques and community buildings were often the only architectural features of note in *qasbahs*.[91] Bijnor's two main attractions were a mosque named Chah Shirin Masjid (purportedly built by Emperor Shah Jahan), and an Idgah, or festival hall used for religious feasts.

Ashrāf Communities in the Qasbah Environment

*Qasbah*s cultivated a *sharīf* or noble culture characterized by a nuanced awareness of *adab*, morals, and *akhlāq*, roughly equivalent to a system of manners or professional etiquette associated with Mughal service.[92] Both of these concepts combine to form a

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[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid., 151-152.
[90] Ibid., 215.
[91] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 47.
[92] Mushirul Hasan, *Introduction to Delhi in Transition* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 1-10.

portrait of the ideal Mughal servant in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one who embodied goodness according to long-established values made venerable by their association with imperial practice. *Adab*, in the pre-Islamic period a term referring to the norms of comportment inherited from forebears, came to have ethical and religious significance. Under the Mughal Empire, the moral sense of *adab* became conflated with the fine manners, advanced learning, and the most elusive of qualities, "good taste," which marked the landed noble or courtier. Aside from an association with government duties, *adab* encompassed the proper upbringing of children, the manners governing all personal and professional interaction, as well as detailed knowledge of a Persian and Urdu literary corpus, cultivated for the purpose of living correctly.[93] The dars-i nizami syllabus, cultivated in the *qasbah* Farangi Mahall, served as a vehicle for cultivating this Iranian-influenced, yet particularly South Asian, concept of the life well lived.[94] Contemporary Urdu use of *adab* has retained the sense of literary learning implicit in the eighteenth and nineteenth century use of the term, while its more nuanced cultural significance has fallen by the wayside. However, the role of these concepts as the building blocks of *ashrāf* society were continually reinforced up to the early twentieth century; Nazir Ahmed's 1906 work *Al-Huqūq wa al-Faraiz* combined the long-standing discussion of traditional etiquette with Muslim virtue,[95] laying the foundation for a growing discourse in which *sharīf* values were subsumed into an emergent, exclusively Muslim identity. At the time of *Madīnah*'s initial publication this process had only begun, although it would solidify in the decades before

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[93] Ira Lapidus, "Knowledge, Virtue, and Action: The Classical Muslim Conception of *Adab* and the Nature of Religious Fulfillment in Islam," *Moral conduct and authority: the place of adab in South Asian Islam*, (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984), 38.
[94] Francis Robinson, "Iranian Influences on South Asia," speech to Iran Society script, Army & Navy Club, London, Autumn 2012, 14-15.
[95] Mushirul Hasan, *Introduction to Delhi in Transition* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 1.

independence. *Qasbah*s were havens for the cultivation and preservation of these traditional morals and manners that once dominated interactions between *ashrāf* Indians. This perception has persisted in the popular imagination.

The *ashrāf* social status group of Indians in *qasbah*s across Awadh and Rohilkhand was not necessarily characterized by adherence to Islam but instead was marked by Indo-Persian traditions that derived from the Mughal period. As late as independence, Hindu family networks (particularly Kayasths and Brahmans) as well as Muslims were paragons of the Indo-Persian culture cultivated under the Mughal Empire and continued in *qasbahs*. Hindus as well as Muslims wrote in Urdu, participated in mushairas, enjoyed traditional Mughal foods such as *biryani* and *qorma* in their homes, and idealized the *qasbah* as an invaluable source of Indian culture. However, in order to fully understand the complexities of *qasbah* life, it is necessary to take into account the influence of Islam on the development of a culture and disposition shared by Muslims and Hindus over an extended period of time. The period between 1912 and 1924 was a period in which we can see a remarkable transformation regarding membership in the *ashrāf* social status group. *Madīnah* demonstrated an attempt to draw firmer boundary lines between Muslim, *sharīf qasbah* culture and the Hindu *ashrāf*. Remarkably, this process ran concomitant with national and local attempts to encourage cooperation between Hindus and Muslims in the cause of self-governance and the Khilafat Movement.

Traditionally, *qasbah*s have been the most diverse of Indian settlements, standing at the nexus of Indian and Perso-Arab culture since the eleventh century. Unlike in larger urban areas, the combination of diversity and close proximity forced intimate interaction

between religious and cultural groups.[96] After the fall of the princely states such as Awadh to the British Empire, the colonial government drew their servants from families who had traditionally provided service to the Mughal Empire. Opportunities for employment and advancement continued to emerge in *qasbah*s across North India, allowing gentrified Indians who were literate in the Persian script and the Urdu language to flourish. Prestigious families of the gentry social status group, composed of Muslims as well as certain Hindu castes such as the Kayasths, remained crucial in providing local administrators to the government. *Qasbah*s had a long-standing tradition of providing government administrators from the ranks of the *ashrāf.* As early as the inception of the Delhi Sultanate in the 13th century, Muslims and Hindus settled as landowners, scholars, Sufis, and traders in small cities that functioned as market towns for surrounding agricultural areas. Rulers drew local administrators and revenue collectors from these communities, their patronage creating a gentry social status group influenced by Mughal culture.[97] The most prosperous *qasbah*s clustered close to the city centres Delhi, Lucknow, and Faizabad (formerly the capital of the princely state of Awadh) for the benefit of service gentry with a high standard of living. As the Mughal Empire's power diminished from the eighteenth century, the princely states of Rampur, Rohilkhand, and Awadh took to patronizing the *qasbah* culture in place of the imperial centre. [98]

Colonial sources emphasized the Muslim roots of *qasbah*s. A late nineteenth century Gazetteer of Awadh province provides a colonial perspective on the *qasbah* context, emphasizing its Muslim origins:

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid., 30, 47.
[98] Ibid., 4.

> "A Musulman settlement in a defensible military position, generally on the site of an ancient Hindu headquarters, town or fort, where, for mutual protection, the Musulmans who had overrun and seized the proprietary of the surrounding villages resided; where the faujdar and his troops, the pargana qanungo and chaudhri, the mufti, qazi and other high dignitaries lived; and, as must be the case where the wealth and power of the Moslem sect was collected in one spot, a large settlement of Sayyad's mosques, dargahs, etc. sprang up."[99]

Although Islam inevitably influenced origins of the *qasbah* environment, Hindus were also critical members of the *ashrāf* social status group. Kayasths and Brahmans, caste groups commonly initiated as munshis or public servants under the Mughal Empire, embodied *ashrāf* cultural values as much as *Sayyids* and *Shaikhs*. Subramanayam and Muzaffar Alam have written a description of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Hindu munshi Nek Rai, probably a Kayasth, whose autobiography of his upbringing in Allahabad and later initiation into Mughal service demonstrated the highest standards of *ashrāf* culture. Part and parcel with his *sharīf* upbringing were thorough literary training in Persian classics, respectful acknowledgement of Chishti Sufi saints, and emulation of his munshi father.[100]

As the princely states began their decline in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the advent of the East India Company, *taluqdars* and *zamindars* emerged as a force to be reckoned with in Awadh.[101] These landed elites embodied aspects of Indo-Persian culture, regardless of religion. In Awadh and Rohilkhand, *taluqdars*' influence was rooted in their majority ownership of land, which they then leased to labourers in exchange for rent and a share in the profits. The *taluqdar*'s emergence as a powerful figure started

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[99] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 312.
[100] Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 312-320.
[101] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 8.

with the award of land grants in 1859, commissioned by governor-general Charles Canning (1811-1879).[102] These administrators became allied with the British to obtain new sources of income, which contributed to the vitality of *qasbah* culture. The exact conditions of tenures varied in each district, as did the demographic composition of *taluqdars*.

In the Bijnor *parganah*, the most influential cultivator families included the Jats, Shaikhs, Sainis, Raawas, and Tagas.[103] Of the prominent cultivator families in this locality, only the Shaikhs were a Muslim kinship group. Majīd Hasan, *Madīnah*'s proprietor, was a Shaikh. His paternal aunt's husband, Faiz ul-Hasan, was the son of Ahmad Hasan, who had taken over the publication *Sahīfa*. Ahmad Hasan worked as a government employee in the copying department of Ambala, a city in contemporary Haryana over 200 km away from Bijnor. Ahmad Hasan, aged 57 the year his nephew-in-law first published *Madīnah*, was a man of limited influence, according to colonial reports.[104] Despite their membership in the Shaikh kinship group, neither of them owned significant amounts of land; instead they derived their livelihood from government service and printing services. A graphic in the Appendix delineates the connections between the Shaikhs most closely with Madīnah Press.[105]

Sharīf Bijnoris would have established themselves in a variety of ways: through government service, education, military service, scholarship and maintenance of Sufi shrines. Majīd Hasan's qualification as a member of this *ashrāf* social status group is clear

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[102] Hasan, *Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity*, 110.
[103] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 218.
[104] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces during the Year 1912*.
[105] See Appendix for a visual representation of the Hasan family tree.

from his honourific "Maulana," despite his limited formal education. Although the Shaikhs were prominent, *taluqdars* and *zamindars* in Bijnor district were both Hindu and Muslim.

Bijnor was average-sized among North Indian *qasbah*s, which tended to be small but could range from 5,000 to 35,000 in size.[106] In the 1901 census the population of the *qasbah* Bijnor was 17,583, a number that would remain consistent.[107] This number stayed consistent over the following decade.[108] The total population of Bijnor district was 215,006 in 1911.[109] Of Bijnor *qasbah*'s inhabitants, 9,429 were Muslim and 7,778 were Hindu (the census also reports 202 Christians, 45 Jains, and 129 Aryas and Sikhs).[110] Like many *qasbah*s of the period, Bijnor *qasbah* boasted a Muslim majority population. Muslims formed a large minority in the Bijnor *parganah* in the 1901 census – 19,705 Muslims compared to 34,588 Hindus. In the district as a whole there were 271,701 Muslims to 497,851 Hindus, with Muslims forming 34.84% of the population.[111] The large proportion of Muslims, more likely to be associated with Indo-Persian culture, assisted in the spread of *sharīf* cultural models.

The development of a distinctive Indo-Persian culture centred in the *qasbah* also received a boost with the migration of *qasbatīs* to neighboring provinces and towns. Hundreds of those born in Bijnor left to other districts in the United Provinces each year.[112]

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[106] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 43.
[107] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 218.
[108] Edward Gait, *Census of India 1911: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Vol. XV, Part II (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1911), 16.
[109] Ibid., 112.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Other communities counted in the census of Bijnor district included Aryas (5,730), Christians (1,933), Sikhs (1,707), and Jains (1,029); Appendix demonstrates Bijnor's population size in comparison to a few of the prominent *qasbah*s nearby.
[112] Edward Gait, *Census of India, 1911: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Vol. XV. Part II. (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1911).

Female emigrations occurred as a result of marriages arranged between clan groups in neighbouring *qasbah*s. The increasingly frequent emigration of male landed gentry in search of opportunity facilitated the growing influence of the *qasbah* in the popular imagination.[113]

*Qasbah*s were each unique, but simultaneously shared some similarities.[114] They tended to be diverse, with multiple ethnic and religious groups living and working side by side. They also demonstrated a profound historical connection to imperial power, which infused *qasbah*s with a self-consciously *sharīf* culture, led by both Muslims and Hindus influenced by a distinctly Indo-Persian milieu. Far from being the recipients of urban culture manufactured in larger urban centres, *qasbah*s demonstrated an active construction of modernity through cultural activities, including literary production.[115]

Bijnor and Sufi Shrines

The influence of Sufis remained another distinctive feature of *qasbah* life. In some cases arriving at the invitation of *ashrāf* landowners, they in turn drew pilgrims from surrounding *qasbah*s or rural areas. [116] Sufis were an important component of Bijnor *qasbah* as well. Small weekly gatherings in honour of Mira Shah Mohammad, a Sufi of

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[113] Hasan, *Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity*, 112.
[114] For information on Kara, see: (Bayly 1980); For Amroha, Budaun, Rudauli, and Bilgram see: Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*.; For Deoband, see: Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*.; Muhammad Khalid Masud, "Trends in the Interpretation of Islamic Law as Reflected in the Fatawa of Deoband School" (MA, McGIll University), 1-30.
[115] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 168.
[116] Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 155-168.

distinctly local importance, occurred every Thursday in the market.[117] Other celebrations reveal an Indo-Persian influence; Thursday evenings were typically set aside for celebrations of a Sufi's life at the *dargah*.[118]

Bijnor boasted a vibrant Sufi religious tradition, which appealed to both Hindu and Muslim inhabitants of *qasbah*s. Celebrations commemorating a Sufi of regional significance named Gogā Pīr, also called Zahir Pīr or Zahir Diwan, occurred annually. The districts and cities surrounding Bijnor, including Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Bidauli, and Meerut, boasted some connection to the spiritual tradition of Zahir Pīr. Distinctive from other districts in the United Provinces, however, Bijnor had a Gogā Pīr or Zahir Pīr following characterized by syncretism. A small fair (approximately 250 people) in honour of Gogā Pīr, or Zahir Diwan as he was known in Bijnor, named "Chhair Zahir Diwan" occurred once a year in Bijnor on the 9th day of the Hindu month Bhaadra or Bhadrapada (this would put the festival at the beginning of September).[119] The festival was a local version of a similar 'urs celebration held across the Bijnor *parganah* and district. Gogā Pīr's annual 'urs celebrations were attended by both Hindus and Muslims in Muzaffarnagar, Sahāranpur (Manikmau), and Meerut (Suraj Kund and Niloha).[120] Gogā Pīr's tomb was in modern-day Rajasthan, near the city Dadrewa.[121] In contrast to nearby Muzaffarnagar, [122] at least nineteen towns in Bijnor district celebrated Zahir Diwan with an annual festival.[123]

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[117] H. R. Nevill, *Bijnor: Supplementary Notes and Statistics to Volume XIV of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (Allahabad: Supt., Govt. Press, 1914), xxxix-xl.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] H. R. Nevill, *Muzaffarnagar: A Gazetteer* (Allahabad: Supt., Govt. Press, 1903), 105.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid., xxxv.
[123] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, xli.

Gogā Pīr or "Gogājī" as he was known in the region, was a Chauhan Rajput ruler who converted to Islam[124] According to one tradition recorded in the UP Gazetteers, Gogā Pīr was descended from a Chauhan Rajput Raja named Vacha or Jewar. Through god's intercession his wife gave birth to Gogā Pīr, and he ruled over a swath of land whose capital was Mehra, in contemporary Haryana. A competing legend describes him as Raja of Bikanir, who after killing his two brothers in battle was granted spiritual absolution through accepting Islam.[125] Various traditions describe Gogā as a warrior-saint who opposed Mahmud of Ghazni, falling to his death on the day of the 'urs with forty-five sons and sixty of his nephews.[126] In early twentieth century Rajputana devotees worshiped a representation of Gogā Pīr on horseback or in the form of a cobra, demonstrating the impact of both Hindu and Muslim traditions.[127] The ceremony held in Bijnor resembled an 'urs in its attempt to memorialize the day of Gogā Pīr's death. While in Muzaffarnagar, Kiratpur, and other towns the fair usually lasted two days, during which time pilgrims carried standards bearing the name of the saint,[128] Bijnor's religious festivals in honour of Zahir Diwan were relatively small.

Devotion to Gogā Pīr, as well as other Sufi 'urs and Hindu festivals, linked Bijnor to religious life in other villages and *qasbah*s in the region. By far the largest religious festival in Bijnor, an annual Ram Lila drew 4,000 people each year. An annual fair in honour of two saints, Barhe Babu and Neza Bale Salar, who were revered in villages and *qasbah*s widely in

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[124] K.D. Erskine, *The Western Rajputana States Residency and Bikaner Agency*, Vol. III-A (Allahabad: The Pioneer Press, 1909), 197.
[125] Nevill, *Muzaffarnagar: A Gazetteer*, 105.
[126] Ibid., 106.; K. D. Erskine, *The Western Rajputana States Residency and the Bikaner Agency: Text*, Vol. Vol. III-A (Allahabad: The Pioneer Press, 1909), 256.
[127] Ibid., 256.
[128] Nevill, *Muzaffarnagar: A Gazetteer*, 105.

the Bijnor *parganah*, occurred every year as well.[129] Today Bijnor is also a site of an annual festival on the occasion of Chaitri Badi Asthami.[130]

Education in Bijnor and Beyond

As mentioned above, literacy had infiltrated only a tiny section of the population in the early twentieth century. While Bijnor *qasbah* boasted several formal educational institutions,[131] relatively few learned enough to qualify as literate. While Bijnor district had one of the worst literacy rates in the province, Shaikhs were noted for having one of the highest literacy rates of any family network in UP.[132] It is also important to note, however, that records available on nineteenth and early twentieth century education do not include madrasahs or accounts of education conducted at home, both characteristic features of *sharīf* Muslim education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Rahman has written on trends in *qasbah* education, observing similarities in educational methods across North India among Muslim *qasbatī*s. During this period children's education, consisting of basic Arabic and Persian, occurred at home under the supervision of either a male relative or a private tutor. Both parents remained crucial influences during this early period of home schooling, after which a child usually gained admittance to one of a few kinds of local schools: madrasah, government school, or

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[129] Nevill, *Bijnor: Supplementary Notes and Statistics to Volume XIV of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, xxxix-xl.; Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 202.
[130] Ibid., 202, 273.
[131] Nevill, *Bijnor: Supplementary Notes and Statistics to Volume XIV of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, xxxi-xxxii.
[132] "Few Districts in the United Provinces are so backward in regard to literacy as Bijnor." Meyer et al., *Imperial Gazetteer*, 197-200.; "Educated by selected castes, tribes or races." Gait, *Census of India, 1911: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, 154-155.

maktab.[133] Some students learned English, if their educational institution offered the subject, or if their families chose an institution where the language was offered. English was not a mandatory subject in *qasbah* schools, however.[134] After school-age education, students in early twentieth century *qasbah*s could have chosen to continue study at a madrasah for a qualification, take up study at Aligarh, or attend a local English-medium college. Regardless of whether *qasbatī*s learned English, the foundations of education at home or school rested on the principles of Islam, Arabic, Persian, and of course Urdu.

Educational credentials enabled a number of different pursuits for *qasbatī*s, whose malleable skills applied to various professions. Rahman has pointed out that, among the *ashrāf* social status group, educated *qasbatī*s rarely limited themselves to a single profession.[135] Nizami Budauni (of Budaun), Abdul Majid Daryabadi (of Daryabad), Maulana Karamat Husain (of Kintor), and Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi (of Thana Bhawan) all embarked on several different roles despite their chosen professions. For instance, Nizami Budauni was not only a government servant, but also an historian, publisher, and educator.[136] Maulana Karamat Husain worked in law, education and the judicial service after gaining his credentials as an Islamic scholar.[137] Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi, educated at Deoband, filled the roles of Sufi mystic, 'alim, and Deoband madrasah educator in his lifetime.[138] This tendency to pursue several different careers helps to explain the revolving nature of *Madīnah*'s

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[133] *maktab* signifies a school intended for both practical and Islamic instruction, as opposed to madrasahs which tended to focus on religious education only.
[134] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 231-232.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi, *Nizami Badayuni: yani Sawaneh Hayat Maulana Nizammudin Husain Nizami Badayuni* (Badayun: Nizami Press, 1949).
[137] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 232.
[138] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi: Islam in Modern South Asia (*Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 11, 25-26.

editorship. While *Madīnah*'s proprietor, Majīd Hasan dedicated himself to his work as a publisher and editor, he also advocated for Muslim causes as a local municipal committee member.

While Bijnor district's literacy figures in any language were lower than average literacy figures in the United Provinces, its literacy rate equalled that of Moradabad and surpassed that of Budaun.[139] Because of lack of documentation, it is not possible to pinpoint literacy rates in the *qasbah* Bijnor during the period of *Madīnah*'s inception. However, more important than specific literacy rates in the *qasbah* are the trends of literacy in Urdu in cities and *qasbah*s across North India, including the United Provinces, the North-Western Provinces, and the Panjab. These Urdu-speaking Muslims would form the primary audience for *Madīnah*'s efforts.

UP was characterized by a small number of literate Indians spread thinly in interconnected networks across North Indian cities and *qasbah*s.[140] An uptick in literacy in UP helped expand the audience for newspapers in Bijnor and beyond. Literacy figures remained abysmal by contemporary standards, however. According to the 1901 census conducted by the British government, 2.11% of the total population in Bijnor district was literate in some language (3.9% of the male population, and .15% of the female population).[141] Using the census data on population from the same period, we can assume that approximately 15,860 men and 560 women knew how to read and write in Bijnor district at the turn of the century. Of literate Indians, at least 48% knew how to read Urdu. At least 41% knew how to read Devanagari script, with the remaining percentage able to

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[139] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 156.
[140] For more detailed information regarding literacy in UP, see Appendix.
[141] These numbers represented a steady increased in the three decades that had passed since the first literacy census conducted by the British in 1872. Ibid.

read both Nastaliq and Devanagari, or languages other than Urdu/Hindustani.[142] Literacy was a distinction of the socio-economic elite in early twentieth century India, in Bijnor more so than in other districts such as Lucknow where literacy rates were substantially higher.

Although literacy in Bijnor and provinces around Northern India remained low in the first half of the twentieth century, there was a strong oral tradition associated with *ashrāf* culture as well. It is likely that the *ashrāf* community in Bijnor, like that in other *qasbah*s across Awadh and Rohilkhand such as Rudauli and Allahabad, would have conducted regular *mushairas* or gatherings where poetry was recited and appreciated by a connoisseur audience.[143] During these readings *ashrāf* Muslims and Hindus alike would have come together in symposia to recite original poetry and classic works in an interactive, flexible format. During a mushaira, no couplet was a success unless followed by verbal praise ("Vah! Vah!" or "Kyā bāt hai" are popular phrases). In this context, poetry was meant for recitation rather than silent reading. This interactive mode of sharing poetry found a correspondent in the tea stalls and sitting rooms of *qasbah*s and cities in North India, where newspaper readers would gather to share the day's news.

Other sources have more than adequately discussed the significant milestones in the early history of the printing press in India.[144] While 'ulama asserted their authority over

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[142] Ibid.
[143] Munibur Rahman, "The Mushaira," *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 3 (1983).; Syed Nur al-Hasan Hashimi. *Eik Nādir Roznāmchah*. (Lucknow, 1954), 4.; For reference to Allahabad see Hasan, *Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity*, 120.
[144] Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India,* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), 29.

print, a trend towards self-interpretation increasingly emerged.[145] Even though most depended on 'ulama to guide them in navigating religious texts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the accessibility and availability of texts allowed for increased individual engagement with religious ideas.[146] This trend in South Asia continued as the twentieth century progressed, enabling Maulānā Majīd Hasan, a man with limited education and social ambition, to combine discussions of religious education, social awareness, and political activism to start a newspaper, *Madīnah*.

While literacy rates were low, common reading practices involved literate people reading newspapers aloud to the illiterate at local tea stalls. Saadat Hasan Manto's short story *Nayī Qānūn*, in which the narrator of the story, a *tangah* driver, picks up distorted bits international news from his wealthier customers, demonstrates the haphazard ways news could reach the illiterate.[147] Those who worked at railway stations and *chai-khānā*s, the social hubs of early twentieth century urban life, picked up news from passersby and shared it with others. In a similar way, women living in houses of literate men would have been present during conversations on issues of national and international importance, discussed in newspapers. While it is difficult to find documentation of *Madīnah*'s circulation among illiterate Indians, it is important to recognize that newspapers and their contents could reach some illiterate Indians through common reading practices.

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[145] Francis Robinson. "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1 Special Issue: How Social, Political and Cultural Information is Collected, Defined, Used and Analyzed (Feb., 1993), 229-251.
[146] Ali, Mohamed, *My life, a Fragment: an Autobiographical Sketch of Maulana Mohamed Ali*. ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1999), 1-15.
[147] Saadat Hasan Manto. "Nayā Qānūn." *Readings in Urdu: Prose and Poetry*, ed. C.M. Naim (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1965), 49-64. Digital South Asia Website, accessed July 2013, http://dsal.uchicago.edu/digbooks/dig_toc.html?BOOKID=PK1975.N18.

Many elderly Urdu-speaking Indians still remember the prominence of the oral culture surrounding newspapers, sometimes called *adā bāzī*. Hotels, *chai-khānā*, or the living rooms of local *sharīf* Muslims would become salons for the reading and discussing of the day's news. Those who did not know how to read asked the literate to provide a summary or read the news out loud. The place of the salon might have differed from city to city, or from community to community within a municipality. In Aminabad, Lucknow, the place to gather was a local bookstore such as Danish Mahal or hotels; in Bihar people flocked to *chai-khānā*s; in Bijnor, local houses provided the best environment for discussion of news. As late as the 1980's children in Pune received free tea for reading news out loud to older patrons of the local *chai-khānā*s.[148] A single issue of a newspaper could reach a large number of people in the North Indian *qasbah* environment, which emphasized the oral digestion of written material. We cannot limit the discussion of *qasbah* newspaper audience to the literate. At the same time, newspapers like *Madīnah* targeted themselves to the *sharīf* section of society in North Indian cities and *qasbah*s, which could appreciate its references to Persian, Arabic, and traditional values.

Madīnah's Role in Local Level Qasbah Issues

Madīnah targeted two different audiences: the thinly dispersed population of Muslim gentry spread across *qasbah*s and cities in North India as well as the British officials who held sway over government policies and other crucial resources. However, newspapers in Bijnor did reflect an awareness of local issues to the extent that those issues overlapped with the concerns of their primary audience. *Madīnah* arbitrated controversy

[148] Ahtesham Khan, personal conversation with author, Lucknow, 30 March 2013.

by rallying support among *ashrāf* and presenting a unified front of Muslim opinion to government observers. The editors of *Madīnah* and other *qasbah*-based newspapers demonstrated awareness of British surveillance both through self-censorship and editorials protesting censorship of other Urdu newspapers. *Madīnah*, when it concerned itself with local *qasbah* issues, tended to do so in order to highlight larger issues of importance to the gentry as well as to effect local educational and electoral policies that might affect their daily life. That being said, it often published "local" news from other *qasbah*s, highlighting its alliance with a broader *qasbah*-born community rather than limiting its relevance to Bijnor. Between 1914 and 1916 *Madīnah* and *Sahīfa* both published editorials unsuccessfully opposing the imposition of a municipal tax and the removal of an octroi duty.[149] As a part of this debate, *Madīnah* printed an article by the joint secretary for the Public Committee in Moradabad, Mirza Ishaq Beg, opposing the imposition of a House Tax and requesting a rise in octroi duty instead.[150] Octroi duties were the main form of collection revenue by municipal councils in Bombay, Panjab, and the United and Central Provinces and dated from the Mughal Period as an imperial tax. In this form of taxation, an annual duty was levied on tillers of land, either in the form of cash or goods. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Bijnor district came into British ownership, the octroi tax instead began to be used for municipal purposes.[151] However, in the early 1910's the Bijnor municipal board proposed to shift from octroi duty to a House Tax, which would provide a direct form of taxation on all members of the *qasbah*, instead of only landowners. The measure would also help provide a more predictable source of

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[149] *Saḥīfa*, 26 February 1914. *UPNNR*, 274.; *Saḥīfa*. 5 March 1914. *UPNNR*, 301.
[150]"Madīnah," 15 January 1916. *UPNNR*, 64.
[151] Henry Herbert Dodwell, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol. 5. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1929), 535.; Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 127.

revenue for members of the municipal board. While *Madīnah* and *Sahīfa* both deplored the act as a sign of municipal board members' greed, their arguments repeatedly posited a distance between the will of "the people of Bijnor" and "the ears of Government."[152]

The purpose of the editorial was twofold: first, Beg sought to mobilize Muslim readers to "use the power they possess" in order to work against the proposed House Tax. Secondly, however, *Madīnah*'s editorial spoke over the heads of Muslim readers directly to the censors who were monitoring Indian vernacular press. The editorial, anonymously penned by a member of the small editorial board, represented its views as that of Muslim popular opinion in order to influence policy not only in Moradabad, but also in *qasbah*s across the United Provinces.

Madīnah and other *qasbah* newspapers were successful in pressuring the government to change local policies regarding grain prices in Bijnor during World War I. Media coverage in *Madīnah* during World War I also reflected a concern with exploitation of local grain markets. Complaints opposed the Government's refusal to fix rates of interest and allowing private export of grain at the expense of local need.[153] *Madīnah*'s objections to grain prices, along with the protestations of other newspapers, regularly appeared in British surveillance records. Bijnor district was not alone in suffering high grain prices. The 1909 Settlement Report for neighboring Moradabad mentions the drastic transformation occurring in rental systems as a result of skyrocketing grain prices.[154] The initial cause of rising prices in Bijnor in 1908 would have been flooding from the monsoon, which also contributed to fatalities from water-born illnesses. Although the harvests in the first years

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[152] "Madīnah," 15 March 1914.; *UPNNR*, 329
[153] "Madīnah," 1 August 1914. *UPNNR*, 906.; "Madīnah," 15 August 1914. *UPNNR*, 925.
[154] H. J. Boas, 1909. *Final Report on the Eleventh Settlement of the Moradabad District* (Allahabad: Government Press, United Provinces, 1909), 15.

of World War I were better, war conditions and inadequate internal transportation kept prices high.[155] The government-supported transition from grain to cash rents, implemented in Amroha in this period, had not yet taken hold in Bijnor.[156] While sugarcane and cotton crops were administered using cash rents, other crops in Bijnor were split between the landlord and the tenant. This made it difficult to assess agricultural revenue in the district, and may have slowed the process of developing adequate protections for landowners and tenants alike after the start of World War I. Regardless of the reason, Government protections failed to solidify. Editorials in *Madīnah* included suspicion of corruption and typical references to the threat of "disturbances" if no action were taken.[157] By early 1915, the British had prohibited private exports of grain and published a *communiqué* on the subject of grain prices. *Madīnah* published an editorial praising governmental efforts, affirming its own influence as a key factor in the legislation as well as providing the British with proof of its responsiveness to the threat of instability. Along with praise, however, *Madīnah* pushed the government to follow through on the results of the *communiqué*, expressing fears that it would find the same fate as the Articles of Commerce Ordinance, which the government had failed to translate into practice.[158] *Madīnah*'s coverage of the controversy regarding grain prices in Bijnor not only reflected the perception among Indians that the government was exploiting local economies for the benefit of the international market. The coverage also demonstrated *Madīnah*'s role as watchdog to the *qasbah*'s immediate locality when its concerns intersected with those of

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[155] Ira Klein. "Population and Agriculture in Northern India, 1872-1921." *Modern Asian Studies* 8, no. 2 (March 1974), 204.
[156] Jones, *The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a 'Muslim' Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha*, 898.; Meyer et al., *Imperial Gazetteer*, 200.
[157] "Madīnah," 22 November 1914. *UPNNR*, 1270. ; "Madīnah," 15 August 1914. *UPNNR*, 925.
[158] "Madīnah," 8 March 1915. *UPNNR*, 258.

the gentry. The Muslim gentry who belonged to the sector of society that *Madīnah* targeted would have included landowners directly influenced by grain prices.

Qasbah Life: A Place Apart

Madīnah's criticism of Muslims who strayed from Islam focused on Muslims in the urban context, indicating an anxiety for the safe-guarding of the *qaum* as a distinct community in an environment where it had been relegated to the realm of private life. Faisal Devji has described how the colonial government crippled "the moral city" by naming religion a private entity. According to this view, madrasahs and mosques were increasingly relegated to the sphere of the private in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, while in the previous legal framework they had always constituted a public space.[159] As "involuntary heirs of the once-powerful Indo-Persian culture" in the words of Mushirul Hasan, *qasbah*s across North India consciously constructed their heritage in contrast to life in cities.[160] While placing emphasis on the importance of the *qasbah* as a source of traditional, Indo-Persian culture and values, inhabitants of *qasbah*s tended to distinguish themselves from urban centres.[161] In this model the *qasbah* became the last bastion of a "public" Muslim identity, which had flourished in the Mughal period, and which under colonial rule was increasingly relegated to the private sphere.

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[159] Faisal Devji, "Gender and the Politics of Space: The Movement for Women's Reform in Muslim India, 1857-1900," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 14, no. 1 (1991), 148.
[160] Hasan, *Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity*, 112.
[161] Ibid.; Muhammad Wali ul-Haq Ansari, "Farangī Mahal kī 'ilmī, adabī aur siyāsī khidmāt," *Naya Daur* February-March (1994), 48.; Muhammad Inayatullah Ansari, *Tazkīra-yi 'Ulāmā-yi Farangī Mahalī*. (Lucknow: n.d.)

Madīnah sets Bijnor apart as a place isolated from the worldly knowledge touted in cities. In response to the publication of the seminal Progressive Writers' Movement book *Angāre* in 1933, *Madīnah* laid out the personality of the *qasbah* in contrast to the city:

> We are grateful to exalted God that he has allowed us to live in a remote township to perform the duties of journalism, a township which is safe from the piety-destroying and faith-removing elements of civilization, where neither the gaities and frivolities of youth and poetry strike with lightning the granary of patience and steadfastness, nor the tumultuousness of beauty breaks the bonds of faith, and where the fierce and fiery winds of atheism and apostasy cannot burn the rose-garden of faith and religion.
>
> *No calamity can reach the seclusion of solitude.*[162]

Although this article was printed beyond the time frame included within this thesis, it is nevertheless indicative of the continuity of *Madīnah*'s role as a voice of the *qasbah*. Interestingly, three cities or *qasbah*s in Bijnor district fostered prominent progressive writers who, like the newspaper *Madīnah*, became resounding successes in the large urban context. Akhtar ul-Iman (b. 1915) was born in Najibabad and educated in Bijnor district. He became a noted Urdu poet and screenwriter for Bollywood films such as the 1961 Yash Chopra hit *Dharmputra*.[163] Siddiqa Begum Sehwarwi (b. 1925) was born in the *qasbah* of Sehwara in Bijnor. She later relocated to Lahore, where she remains a prominent author and editor of the Urdu magazine *Adab-i Latif*.[164] Muslim Saleem, of the *qasbah* Chandpur, also hails from the same district.[165] No progressive writers of note trace their origins to

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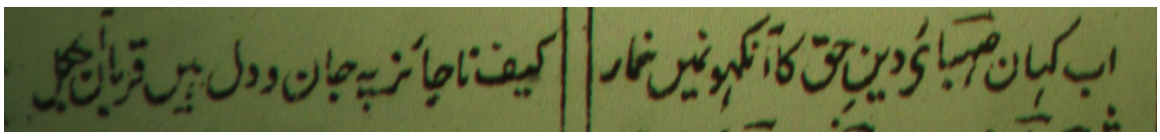
[162] *Madīnah*. 13 February 1933.; Translation published in: Shabana Mahmud, "Angāre and the Founding of the Progressive Writers' Assocation," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 2 (May 1996), 447-448.
[163] Rafey Habib. *An Anthology of Modern Urdu Poetry*. (New York: Modern Language Association, 2003), 109, 796-7.
[164] Siddiqa Begum Sehrwarwi, "Adab-i-Latif," Adab-e-latif Website, accessed 1 August 2013, http://www.adab-e-latif.com/.
[165] Humayun Ansari, email correspondence with author, 30 July 2013.

Bijnor *qasbah*. If *Madīnah*'s tone is any indication, the Shaikhs of Bijnor did not look favourably on the tendencies of progressive writers.

Following 1857, with the decline of patronage to Muslims in cities, and despite colonial emphasis on the barbarism that lay beyond the city walls, *qasbah*s became a place of refuge for administrators, scholars, and religious leaders alike.[166] The shift of the *sharīf* social status group and its discourse from large urban centres such as Delhi to the *qasbah*s that formed the foundation of much of its culture correlated with a more abstract shift of Islam from the public to the private sphere. In *qasbah*s, the legally defined public space of Islam could remain public in a way that was impossible in more central urban areas, where religion had been relegated to the private sphere. This *qasbah*-centred public incorporated Western education and colonial processes to an extent, while retaining emphasis on Indo-Persian cultural ideals. A couplet from one of the first poems published in *Madīnah* in its first issue built on the metaphor of wine, long associated with esoteric knowledge and private love:



ab kahāN saḥbāi-yi dīN-i haq kā ānkhoN-meiN <u>kh</u>amār /

[166] Ibid.

kaif nājā'iz pih jān-o dil haiN qurbān ājkal

Now there is no intoxication with Sahbai's true religion /

Hearts and souls are sacrificed to unlawful intoxication[167]

In other words, instead of surrendering to the private knowledge of God, people drank common *sharāb*. The problem was not simply that Muslims were indulging in impermissible consumption of wine, however. The boundaries of what constitutes private as well as public had lost their rigidity. The interpretation of drunkenness was reduced to intoxication with earthly alcohol – in this nightmare scenario there was no awareness of the higher type of intoxication. In this poem, entitled *Raftarzamanah* or "Quickly changing times," Muslims tended to their newly defined "public" image, as defined by the English, at the expense of their "private" Muslim identity. In English terms, intoxication could occur only through alcohol. In Islam, and specifically in the Indo-Persian tradition, intoxication had always had an esoteric, spiritual meaning. In this couplet the wine-house door was deserted for the English club, where people are drinking earthly rather than spiritual wine. With the redefinition of what constituted public identity, the metaphor of the wine-house in the ghazal (which used to stand only for private love, the feminine, the mysterious union with God) had come to stand for all of Islam. Previously public elements of Islam such as legalism and orthodoxy were subsumed into the metaphor of spiritual intoxication.

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[167] Sahbai was the takhallus of the poet Imam Baksh, contemporary of Ghalib and Persian instructor at Delhi College who was killed by the British during the uprising of 1857. This reference would have invoked the senseless killing by the British of one of the *ashrāf*'s towering figures of poetry, and made the reference to *qurbān* in the second part of the verse more poignant. I owe Eve Tignol many thanks for picking up on this reference.

Legality, as well as esotericism, had become elements of this private intoxication. And both therefore begged redefinition.

Dialogue within the *qasbah*, instead of being an extension of propaganda pushed by *sharīf* Indians in major urban centres, remained a source of original debate that influenced strains of reformist Islam. *Madīnah*'s contributors sought to define new boundaries between the public and private to fashion a new identity centered in the *qasbah*. There were certainly concerns of shoring up the domestic sphere, as well as Sufi practice for that matter, to make it consistent with previously public, and now defined as private, identities. This relates to the North Indian engagement with modernity, using the strategy of "selective appropriation" as defined by Chatterjee.[168] However, these ideas were not accepted wholesale. Instead, the editors of *Madīnah* acknowledged its entries as a part of a longer conversation that attempted to foster an Indo-Persian centered discourse. The newspaper became a new public, which could both act as a representative of Muslims to British observers as well as an admonishment to readers to consider their Muslim identity, if not their *qasbah* roots, as an invaluable feature of their public identity. In this sense, a newspaper became a demonstration of the selective appropriation process.[169] The involvement of Muslim gentry in controversies regarding the arrival of the railroad to Bijnor district in the 1910's and the redrawing of election districts in 1921 revealed the newspaper's centrality in local, public debates.

The North Indian *ashrāf* in *qasbah*s viewed themselves as examplars of Indo-Persian values and traditions. At the same time, the *qasbah* communities of *sharīf* Muslims

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[168] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993).
[169] Rahman, *Qasbah: Network, Everday Islam, and Modernity in Colonial India*, 14.

increasingly viewed themselves as a distinctive society, connected to but distinguished from large urban centres. Concurrently, a process of marginalization of these communities as representatives of a subaltern, "backward" society had begun. Despite contemporary characterizations of *qasbah* life as the voiceless subaltern, *Madīnah* did not lend insight into the world of Bijnor *qasbah*'s illiterate labourers or servants. Those voices can only echo on the margins of the world of the *qasbah* newspaper. However, for a select few, *qasbah*s increasingly became places apart for urban Muslims who increasingly saw themselves as members of a society on a hill, where traditional values were maintained and sheltered from the corrosive influence of modernity defined on European terms. At the same time, the self-proclaimed responsibility to preserve tradition bestowed on these communities a greater flexibility to adopt pragmatically elements of European culture in order to further the Muslim community. Bijnor's character is distinctive in its particular combination of agricultural advantage, its lack of a manufacturing industry, and isolation from trade networks; it is typical in its proximity to Delhi and rich history of administrative power under Mughal and colonial ruler. Like many *qasbah*s, Bijnor defined and defied the mold; its newspapers, particularly *Madīnah*, reflected engagement with political challenges and an ambition to reach the ears of the large urban centre, while retaining the cultural capital earned through its incubation of Indo-Persian tradition. Bijnor's *Madīnah*'s distinctive voice entered into the Urdu public sphere, in the process bringing the concerns of *qasbatī ashrāf* into the limelight.

Chapter 3:

Madīnah and the *Qasbah* Newspaper Conversation

Majīd Hasan's *Madīnah* became one of the most influential newspapers in North India within a decade of its inception. Its rapid rise to prominence among Urdu speaking Muslims has gone unnoticed primarily because of its lack of affiliation with the major urban centres – including Calcutta, Lucknow, Delhi, Lahore, and Bombay - more commonly associated with the vibrant Urdu newspaper culture of the period. This influence maintained from the margins underlines *Madīnah*'s significant achievement. Initially, *Madīnah* related more closely to the Punjab social and political context than to that centered in Lucknow.[1] Majīd Hasan, the proprietor of the newspaper, was educated in a madrasah in Lahore and received his initial training there before returning to his hometown.[2] In the period of the non-cooperation and the Khilafat movement, however, the newspaper expanded its focus and influence to include all of UP.[3] By 1922, *Madīnah* circulated more copies on a bi-weekly basis than any other major nationalist, Indian and English-language paper of the period.[4]

In 1945, the current director of *Madīnah*, Abed Syed Hazmi, appeared in the English-language *Pioneer* pictured next to the Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, indicating the close association between the publication and political power.[5] Bijnor had come to the national limelight during Ibrahim's controversial by-election to the Bijnor legislature in

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[1] *Madīnah* was excluded from Panjab after the Jallianwallahbagh Massacre in 1919 for fear of its undue influence. UP Government Poll. Report for Fortnight Ending 30-4-1919 (Internal Government Correspondence, 1919), 10. NAI.
[2] Parvez Adil, "Madinah Akhbar, Thesis Manuscript" (PhD, University of Najibabad), .
[3] *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces* (United Provinces: United Provinces Government, 1927, 1929, 1936, 1948).
[4] Gyananendra Pandey, *The ascendancy of the congress in Uttar Pradesh 1926-1934: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1978), 64.
[5] *Pioneer*, 12 October 1945.

1937, signalling a remarkable shift in rhetoric among Muslim Leaguers to vitriolic opposition to undue Hindu influence of the Indian National Congress.[6] By the 1930's and 1940's, *Madīnah*'s significance as an advocate for pro-Congress Muslims was secure; this was demonstrated not least by Muslim League's virulent criticism of Congress favoritism in *Madīnah*.[7] As the portrait of *Madīnah*'s editor and Ibrahim implies, *Madīnah* and Bijnor's rise to influence occurred on a similar trajectory. The impact of Bijnor occurred most effectively through Majīd Hasan's mastery of the newspaper medium.

Newspapers' relatively inexpensive mode of production and rapid dissemination transform the history of a publication into a roadmap to popular perceptions of local, national, and international events among the *ashrāf*. The newspaper's polyphonic tone in an age of censorship, gesturing toward an awareness of both an Indian and colonial audience, offered access to an increasingly broad forum on politics, power, and social issues. *Madīnah*'s wide distribution outside Bijnor allowed Majīd Hasan to transcend his initial, low economic status to consolidate his reputation as a representative voice of the

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[6] Ibrahim's defection from the ranks of the Muslim League after winning a UP Legislative Assembly seat caused a heated exchange between Jinnah and Gandhi. Jinnah accused Congress of abandoning its so-called ideals, prompting Gandhi to insist on Ibrahim's resignation, so that he could win a new mandate from Bijnor residents. The successful by-election, distinguished by anti-Hindu rhetoric by the Muslim League, signaled a distinctive polarization based on communal considerations between the Muslim League and Congress. *Madīnah*'s editor at the time, Abed Syed Hazmi, is pictured in an issue of the *Pioneer* on 12 October 1945, with Ibrahim attending the Lucknow Muslim nationalist conference of that year.

[7] Entry for *Madīnah*: "It is a pro-Congress paper. It is a relentless critic of the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha and the religious papers of the Shia community of Muslims. It is a loyal supporter of the Jami'at-ul-Ulama-i Hind and the Deoband School of Muslim divines. Recently a chance was perceptible in its policy when it criticized the Congress and the Government with particularly reference to the Tanda firing incident and certain other affairs, which are adversely being criticized by the Muslim League papers. The criticism was rather harsh and extreme. This change, it is said, has come down owing to the statements issued by Maulana Husain Ahmad Sahib Madani of Deoband and also a feeling of resentment among its Muslim customers, relating to its unqualified support of the Congress and hostility to the Muslim League. It wields a great influence in all circles." *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces* (United Provinces: United Provinces Government, 1937).

ashrāf, the *qasbah*, and Muslims.[8] Although *Madīnah* originated in a marginal location, it reflected a set of concerns particular to the *ashrāf*, which resonated with Muslims who maintained significant links to their *qasbah* roots. In the same way, *qasbah* newspapers appealed to Muslims in search of a cornerstone on which to build an identity during a time of shifting sands.

Readings of *Madīnah* capture the conversation conducted by a vanguard of the *ashrāf*, who conflated Islam with their *qasbah* origins. This study traces the emergence of the *qasbah* newspaper, which in the years between 1912 and 1924 lay beyond the boundaries of centralized institutions in Delhi, Lucknow, Calcutta, and Bombay but nevertheless remained linked to it through the telegraph, as well as professional and kinship networks. At the same time, the paper steadily increased in popularity until it reached a peak circulation at the climax of the Khilafat Movement. While its views were not always in keeping with political trends of Congress or the Muslim League– confounding the separation between the *'ulama* and secular politics, the newspaper was as likely to print news of Deoband as of the Muslim League – the paper's large circulation as well as its astute commentary of political events indicated a wide circle of influence. The years between 1912 and 1924 established *Madīnah*'s identity as a Sunni, Muslim voice of the UP *qasbatī ashrāf.* It remained loyal to that identity, and in some senses to the memory of its glory as a voice of leadership, until it closed in the 1970's.

Among *qasbah* newspapers, *Madīnah*'s large circulation numbers (12,500 in 1922), financial success, and clear connection to pro-Khilafat and nationalist agitation set it apart as a voice of some consequence. *Madīnah* published over 1,000 issues between 1912 and 1924, including over 14,000 separate articles, poems,

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[8] Majīd Hasan made a comfortable profit from his newspaper from the 1920's until 1947. *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces* (United Provinces: United Provinces Government, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1948).

advertisements and news items. Just as *Madīnah* remained aligned with Congress, other newspapers based in *qasbah*s expressed political leanings while remaining committed to the task of providing a forum, in cooperation with other newspapers, for reasonable, faithful *ashrāf* Muslims to consider issues of greatest political and social importance.

During the period between 1912 and 1924 *Madīnah* and its proprietor, Maulana Majīd Hasan, hosted over a dozen editors and sub-editors, several of whom went on to become nationalist leaders in their own right. The newspaper created its own editorials and news items as well as reprinting news from English language and other Urdu language newspapers, marking itself as a member of a vibrant and increasingly influential newspaper discourse. The many contributions appearing without authorial attribution were a product of a small editorial team working to publish the paper. As the paper became increasingly successful, it expanded into a publishing house named Madīnah Book Agency, publishing a literary magazine for children, *Ghunchah*, as well as books on subjects as wide-ranging as sport, medicine, philosophy, and, of course, Urdu.

Minault has stated on the subject of Urdu poetry that "it is virtually impossible to estimate its impact on the popular mind in terms of actual ideas conveyed or numbers swayed."[9] Although when researching Indian language newspapers, rather than orally-transmitted poetry, we have the added benefit of circulation numbers, distribution records, and government surveillance records, the essential problem of measuring cultural and political impact remains. More compelling questions than that of simple importance demand attention. What we can do in the case of *Madīnah* and other significant *qasbah* newspapers is discuss the importance of the newspaper in Urdu culture of the early twentieth century, *Madīnah*'s place in that culture, and the ways in

[9] Gail Minault, "Urdu Political Poetry during the Khilafat Movement," *Modern Asian Studies* 8, no. 4. (1974), 460.

which that newspaper was informed by transforming social realities of the twentieth century, *qasbatī ashrāf*.

This chapter demonstrates through *Madīnah* the *qasbah* newspaper's attempt to valorize the Urdu newspaper discourse as a representative Muslim voice, with limited success. Both its *ashrāf* distinction and location in the *qasbah* stood as claims to credibility. *Madīnah* built its reputation in two ways. First, it presented the Urdu press, or what the British termed the Muhammadan press, as forming an abstract yet distinctive space for the expression of community values. Secondly, *Madīnah* distinguished itself from other Urdu language newspapers through emphasizing the value of its *qasbah* origins, which were shorthand for traditional values and authentic religion. Through the influence of its proprietor, Majīd Hasan, and contributing editors, *Madīnah* successfully became a significant voice during the influential period spanning the beginning of the Balkan Wars in 1912 to the end of the Khilafat Movement in 1924. It later built on this foundation to become a major player in the independence movement of the 1930's through its support for first the Muslim League, and later the Congress Party. While the scope of this chapter does not extend past 1924, in this section I situate *Madīnah* and other significant *qasbah* newspapers in the context of the period between 1912 until 1924.

The thread connecting Urdu literary culture and nationalist activity remains untied. This chapter is an attempt to understand Urdu's role in building a public sphere, through the analysis of a distinctive, *qasbah* newspaper voice. The clearest way to trace the details of such distinctions is through a study of an individual paper, *Madīnah*, contextualized in the landscape where other influential newspapers in urban areas and *qasbah*s participated.

Literary Production in the Qasbah

Colonial sources often dismissed local journalism in *qasbah*s as inconsequential, only cursorily mentioning Urdu weeklies (in Bijnor, before *Madīnah* these were *Qulqul,* the *Sahīfa*, and *Tohfa-i-Hind*). There was also the weekly *Risāla Tāza Nazair* and the monthly magazine *Zamindār wa Kāshtkar* (which, under the leadership of Muhammad Khalīl-ur-Rahman of Mandawar, dealt with agricultural issues). In 1906, the only publication distributed outside of the town of its publication in Bijnor district was the *Upkār* of Naginah, owned and distributed by a Jat. However, Bijnor district and *qasbah* both were in the process of investing in journalism infrastructure. The district boasted six or seven lithographic presses in the first decade of the twentieth century.[10] By 1913, *Madīnah* was part of a conversation in and among *qasbah*s regarding the place of Islam in the modern world. Other, larger, publications, based in Delhi and even as far as Lucknow, as well as small-scale *qasbah* operations contributed to the same discourse. *Madīnah* distinguished itself from urban centred publications through its embrace of the *qasbah* context, partly through its influence on beautiful calligraphy. Newspapers founded in larger cities spread to *sharīf* Muslims of Bijnor and other districts, contributing to general awareness of political and social developments.[11] *Qasbah* newspapers interpreted those developments according to local contexts. To correctly understand *Madīnah*'s place in the Urdu media sphere of the early twentieth century, we should consider its relationship to the following publications: *Al Hilāl* (Calcutta), *Hamdard* (Delhi), *Zamindār* (Lahore), *Zamāna* (Kanpur), *Zulqarnain* (Budaun), *Awadh Akhbār* (Lucknow), *Milāp* (Delhi), *Aljami'at* (Delhi), *An Nadwah* (Lucknow) and *Tahzīb*

[10] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 107.
[11] Nur al-Hasan Rashid's *qasbah* in Kandhla, 100 miles outside Delhi, still houses holdings of *Madīnah* from the first half of the twentieth century along with publications from *qasbah*s all over North India.

al-Akhlāq, the official newspaper of Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, which became Aligarh University in 1920. It is also useful to briefly consider two other publications published in the Bijnor municipality in addition to *Madīnah*: *Saḥīfa* and *Al Khalīl.* In many cases the readership of all these publications overlapped. That being said, *Madīnah* freely commented on English language newspapers in relation to hot-button issues of the day. The following Urdu-language newspapers are relevant to a reading of the *qasbah* newspaper conversation for different reasons. Some, such as *Zamindār*, *Zamāna*, and *Tahzīb al-Akhlāq*, are frequently comment on the same issues. Others, such as *Zulqarnain*, *Al Khalīl,* and *Saḥīfa*, offer alternative perspectives of newspapers in the *qasbah* context. Bijnor-based publications *Saḥīfa* and *Al Khalīl* offer a comparative perspective of the *qasbah* newspaper tradition in Bijnor specifically.

Saḥīfa (founded on or before 1902)[12] was left under the control of Majīd Hasan, after the death of his paternal aunt's husband Ahmad Hasan. The two papers were similar in tone and content, with Mohammad Nur ul-Hasan contributing articles to both. While unsurprisingly echoing *Madīnah*'s analysis of social and political analysis, *Saḥīfa* tended to focus more on municipal and local news; its criticism of the Bijnor High School headmaster in 1911 attracted the ire of the British.[13] Until 1912 *Al Khalīl* was a monthly publication named *Zamindār -wa Kashtkar*, which focused on local and agricultural news. After 1912, the proprietor Muhammad Yakub shifted its focus to topics of general interest to Muslims, focusing particularly on the role of Turkey in the Italo-Turkish war.[14] With a circulation of 400, *Al Khalīl* commanded a similar sized audience as *Madīnah*. However, since its editor, Maulvi Khalīl ur-Rahman, was a

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[12] Narain cites the earliest known issue of *Saḥīfa*, published February 1902. See: Kirti Narain. "Hindi and Urdu Newspapers in Uttar Pradesh," *Press, Politics and Society in Uttar Pradesh, 1885-1914* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998), 38, 65.
[13] *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces 1913*.
[14] Ibid.

landowner and colonial servant of some notoriety, his paper was more likely than *Madīnah* to have had influence in the Bijnor *qasbah*.[15]

Some newspapers in large urban centres, such as *Zamindār* (Lahore), began as publications targeted towards landed gentry, like many publications in *qasbah*s. In the early 1900's Maulānā Siraj-ud-din Ahmed founded *Zamindār* to deal with issues of importance to farmers and landed gentry. After Siraj-ud-din Ahmed's death in 1909, his son Zafar Ali Khan restarted its publication in May 1911 as a publication intended to advocate the cause of Muslims. The Italo-Turkish War acted as a lightning rod for issues related to the Muslim community, propelling *Zamindār* into a daily newspaper status.[16] *Madīnah*, like *Al Khalīl*, *Saḥīfa*, and *Zamindār*, sought to cultivate a primary audience beyond local *ashrāf* landowners. By focusing almost exclusively on articles of "general" rather than local interest, it targeted itself to *sharīf*, educated Muslims across North India. From its inception, the star power of the blind journalist Mohammad Nur ul-Hasan, the elegant calligraphy of the poet Zammarud-raqam, and an emphasis on a particularly Muslim consciousness drew readers who appreciated traditional Muslim values of Urdu poetry and calligraphy but coveted an awareness of the rapidly expanding geographical horizon of Indian journalism.

In contrast to these publications, which evolved from the concerns of landed *ashrāf* to a publication interested in engaging with a broader public sphere, a few urban centre newspapers founded or revived between 1911 and 1913 reacted to Britain's indifference to the Ottoman Empire during the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars.[17] In July 1912, after the conclusion of the Italo-Turkish Wars and just before the outbreak of the

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Rauf Parekh. "Allama Iqbal, Zafar Ali Khan and *Zamindār*." *Dawn.* 7 July 2011. http://beta.dawn.com/news/671867/allama-iqbal-zafar-ali-khan-and-zamindar.
[17] John Willis,"Debating the Caliphate: Islam and Nation in the Work of Rashid Rida and Abul Kalam Āzād," *The International History Review* 32, 4 (2010), 2.

first Balkan War, Abul Kalam Azad, who later became a senior leader of the Indian nationalist movement, founded the newspaper *Al Hilāl*.[18] He named his publication for an Egyptian newspaper, to cultivate sympathy among Indian Muslims for coreligionists in both Asia and Africa.[19] *Al Hilāl* emphasized Azad's independence as a journalist from special interests, and sought to promote awareness among Muslims of the importance of social and political awareness. Azad affirmed the importance of Islam as the foundation of any social or political action.[20]

Popular in Bengal, the United Provinces, and Punjab, *Al Hilāl* cultivated a sense of the importance of the Caliphate as a unifying power for the world's *ummah*.[21] The colonial government closed it in November 1914, after the start of World War I. Although Azad attempted to revive the paper under the new banner *Al-Balagh*, it lasted a mere five months before closing.[22] Through the medium of *Al Hilāl*, Azad promoted self-government, unity between Muslims and Hindus, as well as a distinctively Muslim approach to Indian politics. He balanced these three priorities in a way analogous to that of *Madīnah*, although his emphasis on political action rendered his project anathema to colonial rule from the outset. Azad criticized British involvement in the

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[18] Maulānā Abul Kalam Āzād, *India Wins Freedom* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1988).
[19] Willis, "Debating the Caliphate," 2.
[20] Abul Kalam Āzād, *Al Hilāl*, 22 October 1912. Quoted (in Urdu) in Rihān Hasan, "Maulāna Āzād kī Urdu Sihāfat," *Nayā daur* (Lucknow: Information and Public Relations Department, 2011), 31.; for studies on *Al Hilāl* and Maulānā Āzād see: *The dawn of hope: Selections from the Al Hilal of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2002)
[21] Ayesha Jalal. "Striking a Just Balance: Maulānā as a Theorist of Trans-national Jihad," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 1 (2007), 95-107.; Ravindra Kumar, *Life and Works of* Maulānā *Abul Kalam Āzād* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1991).; Ian Henderson Douglas, *Abul Kalam Āzād, an intellectual and religious biography*, ed. Gail Minault and Christian W. Troll. (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1988).; Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, *Islamic Seal on India's Independence: Abul Kalam Āzād, a Fresh Look* (Karachi: Oxford UP, 1998).
[22] Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, *Islamic Seal on India's Independence : Abul Kalam Azad, a Fresh Look* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 73.

Italo-Turkish war and the Balkan Wars. At the same time, Azad's paper emphasized cooperation with Hindus in order to achieve political ends.[23]

Qasbah newspapers commented on political aims, the Balkan Wars, and cooperation with Hindus. In the same way, *Madīnah* did occasionally encourage cooperation between Muslims and Hindus in the period preceding the Khilafat Movement.[24] *Madīnah* alternately blamed communalist sentiments on divisive practices by the British government and Hindus' unwillingness to compromise.[25] *Al Hilāl*, like *Madīnah*, balanced the commitment to the superiority of Muslim values with the necessity of cooperation against colonial rule. *Madīnah* and other *qasbah* newspapers differed in the terms with which they justified their authority, through Islam and the Indo-Persian legacy. The group of landed *ashrāf* represented in these publications, like the old guard of the All-India Muslim League, demonstrated a lingering ambivalence regarding the desire to cooperate against colonial rule and the desire to promote Muslim interests in the colonial state.

Compared to other newspapers based in more central areas such as *Al Hilāl* and *Urdu-i-Mu'alla*, *Madīnah* initially avoided major clashes with the British government. Maulānā Hasrat Mohanī, born in the United Provinces' *qasbah* Mohan (in Unnao district), started the newspaper *Urdu-i-Mu'alla* in Aligarh in July 1903. The newspaper focused on a combination of literature and politics, and demonstrated a decidedly anti-English perspective to readers. Again here, the tendency in larger urban areas for anti-English newspapers to crop up independent of a pre-existing publication appears. Mohanī was arrested for sedition following the publication of an article "The

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[23] Hasan, *Qasbas: A Brief in Propinquity*, 31.; Abul Kalam Āzād, *Al Hilāl*, 22 October 1912.
[24] *UPNNR*, 1 March 1916.
[25] *UPNNR*, 15 May 1914.; *UPNNR*, 1 January 1914.

Educational policy of the English in Egypt."[26] The British labeled *Urdu-i-Mu'alla* a paper requiring "careful watching" in 1912. Mohanī was again arrested on 13 April 1916 for sedition; after his release, he continued the running of his paper from 1918 until 1924, when his third arrest finally caused the paper to close permanently.[27] *Madīnah*'s editors would have been aware of the threat of fines and arrest when publishing their articles. This awareness may have influenced *Madīnah*'s efforts to identify itself with the British crown in 1912, through linking the newspaper's name to the ship that bore George V to India for his coronation *darbār*; its ambivalence also may gesture toward the *qasbah*'s roots in a landed *ashrāf* context.

Other urban publications were also distinctly political. Mohammad 'Alī, the prominent Muslim activist and agitator against colonial rule, started the English journal *Comrade* in 1911 in Calcutta, before moving the journal to Delhi in 1912. After his move to Delhi, on 1 June 1913 he started an additional companion journal in Urdu entitled *Hamdard*.[28] The first Urdu newspaper to employ a letterpress instead of lithography, *Hamdard* emphasized joint Hindu and Muslim action against the colonial government (in contrast, *Madīnah* questioned the ability of Hindus and Muslims to cooperate in the period before the Khilafat Movement).[29] Although it emphasized Muslim cooperation with Hindus, the newspaper emphasized its identity as a Muslim publication, including a quote from the Qur'an on the margin above the title.[30] Just as *Madīnah* often included a pictoral representation of the city *Madīnah* (as well as the boat Madeena, in its first

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[26] *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces* 1913, 405.
[27] Hasan 'Abāsur Fitrat, "Urdu Sihāfat Ki Nashīb-O-Farāz," in *Nayā Daur* (Lucknow: Information and Public Relations Department, 2011), 81.
[28] Syed Tanvir Wasti, "The Circles of Maulānā Mohamed Ali," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 4 (2002), 51-62.
[29] Shafeh Qidwai, "Maulānā Muhammad 'Ali Jauhar Aur Hamdard," in *Nayā Daur* (Lucknow: Information and Public Relations Department, 2011), 29.
[30] Shafeh Qidwai, "Maulānā Muhammad 'Ali Jauhar Aur Hamdard," in *Nayā Daur* (Lucknow: Information and Public Relations Department, 2011), 29.Ibid.

year), *Hamdard* included a picture of the Jama Masjid on its title page. As in other newsletters of the day, the editors' names appeared in the margins of the first page. Although Mohammad 'Alī had high hopes for the paper, in the beginning he could only afford to print it on a single page. In contrast, *Madīnah* began as a 13-page newspaper that only later diminished to an average of 9 pages.

Censorship and arrest remained a constant threat for Mohamed 'Alī's publications. *Hamdard*, officially titled "Naqīb Hamdard" or the "Sympathizer Herald," ran from 13 May 1913 until 10 August 1915; after a revival November 1924 it closed permanently in April 1929.[31] Colonial administration shut down the English journal *Comrade* in November 1914, after Mohamed 'Alī published a strongly-worded editorial entitled *The Choice of the Turks*, responding to a *Times* article on the same name. 'Alī's column expressed strong sympathies with Turkey and its loss of territory to the Allies.[32] *Comrade* was closed and a security demanded under the Press Act of 1910. *Hamdard* seems to have also ceased publication at the same time. Mohamed 'Alī was arrested on 15 May 1915, and the cause for his release became a focus of other newspapers such as *Madīnah* until his release in 1919. In an environment where accusations of sedition were a constant threat, *Madīnah* appeared as a publication committed to discussion of relevant issues but initially wary of British censorship. This wariness, shared by other *qasbah* publications, indicated the influence of landed interests as well as a survivalist

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[31] *Comrade* was published between 1911 and 1914, and again from 1924 until 1926 (Wasti 2011, 61); Qidwai, "Maulānā Muhammad 'Ali Jauhar," 29.; Syed Tanvir Wasti, "The Circles of Maulana Mohamed Ali," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 4 (2002), 51-62.

[32] Wasti includes quotation from Mohammad Ali's fiery response to a certain *Times* article in his piece: "Are not the Turks men? Do they not have feelings and sensibilities as other men? Look at France. Had she forgotten the claims of *revanche* nearly half a century after the loss of Alsace and Lorraine?... Has not the dome of its Aya Sofia, or the ancient pile of its Eski Juma or Old Mosque the same meaning for the Osmanli warrior or statesman that the Cathedral spire of Strassburg has for the French historian?" Syed Tanvir Wasti, "The Circles of Maulana Mohamed Ali," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 4 (2002), 51-62.

mentality, which allowed *qasbah* publications to outlast more explicitly political radical publications in large urban centres.

Zamāna, an Urdu newspaper published in Kanpur by Zamāna Press beginning in 1908, issued monthly at an annual price of 4 rupees. Its circulation far outstripped most of its Urdu competitors, at 1,700 per issue. The proprietor and editor, Daya Narayan Nigam, B.A., was a Kayasth in his thirties with a great deal of landed wealth and a net worth of "thirteen lakhs." Accordingly, the British described him as influential.[33] The British considered the pro-Congress newspaper as "well got up" and "the best Urdu journal in the provinces" in 1912.[34] In the 1910's it occasionally published works by the pen of Lāla Lājpat Rai, a prominent Indian freedom fighter.

Qasbah newspapers illustrate a flourishing network between *sharīf* and educated *qasbah* communities. Budaun's *Zulqarnain* was published in Budāun at the Nizāmī Press in Sota Muhalla. The owner of the press Nizam-ud-din Husain filed for the license to print his paper in 1905 after his dismissal as head copyist in Shajahanpur. The shift from one *qasbah* to the other was common among journalists of the period, demonstrating a flexibility and interconnectedness between publishers and printers of newspapers in *qasbah*s across North India. Nizam-ud-din Husain, like Majīd Hasan, was a young Shaikh; in contrast to Hasan, however, Husain had acquired land and influence among the gentry of Budāun.[35] The weekly newspaper was pricier than *Madīnah*, at 12, 5, and 3 rupees per year depending on the wealth of the subscriber. Its circulation in 1912 was 300. The newspaper, aside from promoting Muslim issues generally, promoted the Muhammad Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh and the Muslim League in the 1910's. The newspaper is described as being "locally respectable, but… connected

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[33] *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces 1913*, 409.
[34] For the entry on *Zamāna* in the Vernacular Newspaper Report, see Appendices.
[35] *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces 1913*, 409.

with an extreme section of Muhammadans elsewhere."[36] This trend of *qasbah* newspapers having separate identities for different localities was born out in *Madīnah* as well. The isolation of the *qasbah* environment in some ways seemed to free the *qasbah* publication from identification with any specific political ideology, allowing it to adapt and contribute to several diverse contexts. As indicated by levels of surveillance, colonial assessment, and circulation numbers, *Zulqarnain*'s influence was disproportionate to its relative isolation in UP. Other *qasbah*s in North India published newspapers of varying levels of popularity. Map I below shows several UP *qasbah*s where popular newspapers were based; the map also demonstrates the location of *qasbah*s in relation to large urban centres. Newspapers based in *qasbah*s that rose to at least minor prominence between 1900 and 1942 include *Al Khalīl* (Bijnor), *Al Qasīm* (Deoband), *Insāf* (Amroha), *Hilāl-i Sidāqat* (Bijnor), *Al Bāshīr* (Etawah), *Almorā Akhbār* (Almora), *Insād* (Basti), *Itiḥād* (Amroha), *Manṣūr* (Bijnor), *Madīnah* (Bijnor), *Najat* (Bijnor), *Tablīgh* (Budaun), *Toḥfa-i Hind* (Bijnor), and *Zulqarnain* (Budaun).

Map I:

[36] Ibid., 411.

Map of the United Provinces, circa 1909

Qasbas with documented newspaper activity between 1912 and 1924 are identified in italics.
Major urban centers with prominent newspaper industries are in bold.



Other newspapers overtly represented institutions and their official stances on a variety of issues. *Aljami'at*, the newspaper of the Jami'at-ul-'Ulama-i Hind, was published in Delhi between 1920 and 1953.[37] The *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, edited by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and affiliated with Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College (later Aligarh University), was published from the the 1860's until Sir Syed's death in 1898. *An Nadwah* was the official publication of Nadwat ul-'Ulama, the Lucknow madrasah where Maulānā Shibli formed one member of the leadership in the first years of *Madīnah*'s existence.

[37] Both of these newspapers are in the archives at Cambridge University.

In this context, in 1912, *Madīnah* newspaper appeared as the brainchild of proprietor Majīd Hasan, who cited the *ijāzat* of the Magistrate and Collector of Bijnor, G.B. Lambert.[38] In mentioning Lambert, Hasan was identifying himself with the traditional hierarchy of authority centered on colonial power. G.B. Lambert, a career civil servant who first arrived in India in 1897, was Magistrate and Collector at Bijnor from 1910 until 1914, when he shifted to Benares. L.M. Stubbs took over the position of Magistrate and Collector in Bijnor subsequently. Interestingly, Lambert later escalated through the ranks of the civil service to serve first as Registrar of Land Records, Finance Secretary, Chief Secretary, and finally a Finance Member. He was the Finance Member in Lucknow who greeted the members of the Simon Commission during their arrival in Lucknow in December 1928[39] and once again found himself the centre of a storm of controversy following his appointment over the Nawab of Chatari as interim governor of the United Provinces in 1928.[40] After his interim governorship, he was appointed the Chancellor of Lucknow University.[41]

Madīnah was named for both the holy city of Islam and the boat that carried George V to his coronation *darbar* in Delhi. Hasan's nod to royal authority was complete with sketches glorifying the boat *Madeena* that had brought the English king to South Asian shores.[42] The newspaper published columns from scholars and laymen of Deoband, Nadwah and other *qasbah*s in the United Provinces in order to expand the public to the domain of the *qasbah*, where *ashrāf* (often Muslims) could carry on

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[38] "*Akhbār Madīnah ka vajah-ye tasmiya* [The reason for the naming of *Madīnah*]," *Madīnah*, 1 May 1912, 1.
[39] *The Times of India*, Dec 1, 1928, 13. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India (1838-2003).
[40] *The Times of India*, Dec 19, 1928. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India (1838-2003).
[41] *The Times of India*. Mar 25, 1929. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India (1838-2003).
[42] Khāmah, Nur ul-Hasan Naqwi-Harīr. *Intikhāb-i Muzāmin-i Dākṭar 'Abd ullah Ghāzī* (Unknown: n.d.,), 11.

discourse on issues of spiritual and social importance in their native tongue. The majority of articles appeared without attribution, as mentioned above, and were often the product of a small editorial team comprising the proprietor, editor, and sub-editors. Externally contributed articles tended to attribute authorship more regularly. *Madīnah* grew into a voice for nationalist Muslims, harshly critical of the colonial government's policies and cultural influence.[43]

Print Technology and Reputation

Technical approaches to print set *qasbah* newspapers and some urban-based publications apart. *Al Hilāl*, like *Hamdard*, used letterpress rather than lithography.[44] This placed *Al Hilāl* and *Hamdard* at the forefront of new printing technologies, enabled no doubt by those editors' proximity to cutting edge technology in Calcutta and characteristics of a distinctive aesthetic.[45] *Madīnah*, in contrast, continued to use the method of lithography printing, more easily adapted to the Urdu script than more modern letterpress machines.[46] Lithographic prints produced either by taking an impression from a copy prepared by a katib or through mirror-writing directly on the lithographic stone, were a hallmark of traditional Urdu newspaper production and remained popular until the latter half of the twentieth century. In fact, lithography was

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[43] Hasan 'Abāsur Fitrat, "Urdu Sihāfat ki Nashīb-o-farāz," *Nayā daur* (Lucknow: Information and Public Relations Department, 2011), 81.
[44] Hasan, *Qasbah*, 30.
[45] For commentary on the historic difficulty of adapting Urdu Nastaliq script to print, see: Geoffrey Wheeler, "Modernization in the Muslim East: The Role of Script and Language Reform,"*Asian Affairs* (24 August 2007), 157-164.
[46] While *Madīnah* Press eventually acquired a letterpress machine from Britain, it is apparent from the printing style in the first decade of its existence that the newspaper is printed using the lithotype method. This method involves engraving words on the surface of a printing stone, before using a combination of wax and chemicals to print a relief of the image on a piece of paper. Wheeler points out that one lithotype stone often served multiple local newspapers; it is possible, therefore, that *Al Khalīl* and *Madīnah* shared the same printer before *Madīnah* Press acquired its own machine.

the only way to accurately capture the nuances of the Nastaliq script. Mirror-writing in particular as a lithographic printing method was associated with Lucknow.[47] Lucknow, like *qasbah*s, continued to embrace lithographic print until the advent of word processing technology in the last few decades, whereas Aligarh, Delhi, and Calcutta tended to embrace letterpress.

Image A:



Portrait of Maulānā Azad and copy of *Al Hilāl*, published by *The Hindu*.[48]

[47] Abdul Halim Sharar, "Scripts – Calligraphy and the Urdu Press," in *Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*, eds. E.S. Harcourt and Fakhir Hussain (London: Paul Elek, 1975), 108.
[48] Shubhomoy Sikdar. "More than just a chronicle." *The Hindu*, 13 July 2012, accessed 25 June 2013, http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/more-than-just-a-chronicle/article3634439.ece.

Image B:



Issue of *Madīnah* from 8 March, 1919. The characteristic slant of Nastaliq, which causes each line of script to drift slightly downwards from right to left, makes clear that *Madīnah* was printed using the lithotype method.

Maulānā Azad's use of the letterpress in *Al Hilāl* (left) resulted in a standardized appearance of all script. The result would have been professional, modern, and distinctively urban to Indian readers, since large urban centers such as Calcutta were the only places where this sort of cutting edge technology was in existence. *Madīnah*, on the other hand, without access to the letterpress until much later, employed the lithographic press.[49] In the lithographic print method, images created with oil, fat, or wax were treated with gum arabic, to absorb ink. Paper was then pressed against the image, so that only the waxy images, which had attracted ink, created an impression on the page. While more cumbersome and time consuming than letterpress methods, lithography allowed for the recreation of elegant Nastaliq calligraphy more effectively than other printing methods. Majīd Hasan capitalized on its use of lithograph by appointing a renowned calligrapher as its sub-editor (Qavi Zammarud-raqam

[49] Nur ul-Hasan Naqwi-Harīr Khāmah, *Intikhāb-i Muzāmin-i Dāk̲tar 'Abd Ullah Ghāzī* (Unknown: Unknown, 11. (Khāmah n.d., 11)

Amrohavī). *Madīnah*'s employment of fine calligraphy became one of its calling cards.[50] Majīd Hasan transformed his inability to access the most modern of printing methods into a purposeful promotion of Urdu tradition, in the form of Nastaliq.

Judging from the calligraphy of its edition of *Diwān-i Ghālib*, written in 1904 and published around the same time (see Image C), Nizāmī Press also employed lithographic printing methods. Printing presses based in *qasbah*s tended to employ lithography as a method of printing newspapers in the first three decades of the twentieth century, both as a matter of preference and since reliable letterpress technology for Urdu had not yet arrived to less central areas of North India. The number of printing presses in a town was not necessarily determined by population size, however. Significantly, the 1911 gazetteer of Bijnor mentioned four or five lithographic presses in Bijnor *qasbah*, while only one existed in each of the better-connected and larger towns Naginah and Najibabad.[51]

Understanding the modes of producing newspapers allows us to decode the way in which readers viewed newspapers. Letterpress publications such as *Al Hilāl* and *Hamdard* would have taken advantage of the letterpress to make printing easier and quicker. *Qasbah* newspapers such as *Madīnah* and *Zulqarnain* may have attempted to transform a limitation into an aesthetic draw; their printing method maintained a visual link with traditional methods of Urdu calligraphy. Using a letterpress, in contrast, required printers to standardize and make more rigid the script used to publish. The calligraphy in *Madīnah* and other *qasbah*-based papers would have helped set it apart as a bastion of traditional Muslim values.

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[50] Parvez Adil, conversation with author, Bijnor, 15 April 2013.
[51] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 107.

Image C:



Title page of Budāun Nizāmī Press edition of *Dīvān-i Ghalib*.

The method of printing here is lithography.

The success of *qasbah* newspapers in linking the lithographic printing method with Indo-Persian cultural capital may have contributed to the continued preference for lithography. The newspaper *Milāp* in Delhi, founded in 1923 as the Khilafat Movement drew to a close, still publishes in Delhi, Hyderabad, and Jullundur.[52] *Milāp* was founded towards the end of the Khilafat Movement, choosing to depend on the lithographic press rather than the letterpress method.[53]

Retaining Muslim scholarly authority over religious material published in presses was obviously an issue of concern in *Madīnah*; this priority was manifest in debates on technical reproduction of texts. In March 1917 *Madīnah* took the opportunity to speak against a reported proposal to print the Qur'an on a steam press. The strength of Lahori 'ulama accusations against Maulwi Mumtāz 'Alī, the proprietor of Rafāh-i 'Ām Steam Press [Public Welfare Steam Press], provoked 'Alī to issue a public

[52] It now publishes in both Urdu and Hindi. *Milāp* Website, accessed 5 June 2013, http://www.milap.com/aboutus.html.
[53] B.N. Goswamy, "The Story of Printing," *The Tribune*, accessed 6 June 2013, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2012/20120212/spectrum/art.htm.

statement. In his response ‘Alī claimed that he had never intended to print a copy of the Qur’an in the first place, demonstrating both the power of accusations of the ‘ulama, which demanded a response, and the controversy associated with printing copies of the Qur’an without proper authorization from scholars.[54] It was unclear from the article whether to what extent the arguments against the printing of the Qur’an by Rafāh-i ‘Ām Steam Press were due to Mumtāz ‘Alī’s inadequate scholarly authority and to what extent the objections were due to the plan to print it on a steam press. Steam press printing technology may not have preserved the beauty of Arabic calligraphy in the same way as the lithographic press managed to do. In the same issue, which denigrated this “steam press” version of the Qur’an, there is an advertisement for a *mo’ar’ra*[55], publication of the Qur’an, in which “the letters are reproduced purely” on paper coloured with henna. Furthermore, the publishers guaranteed the sparkling clarity of the calligraphy.[56] Therefore, the objection does not seem to be against reproductions of the Qur’an *per se*, but against those which are not adequately able to reproduce the original. The calligraphy was considered a crucial aspect of communicating holy knowledge.

*The Story of Madīnah: Qasbah*s *Shaping Discourse*

As social and political realities rapidly transformed society, the proprietor and editors of *qasbah* newspapers sought not merely to report on the diverse attitudes of Muslims toward these changes, but more importantly sought to shape discourse on what it meant to be an *ashrāf* Muslim in the first half of the twentieth century. As

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[54] “*Qur’ān sharīf ke mut’aliq Maulvī Mumtāz ‘Alī kī pazishan* [Maulvi Mumtaz ‘Ali’s position regarding the Holy Qur’an],” *Madīnah*, 9 March 1917.
[55] A version of a holy text without notes or translation
[56] “*Shāndār Qur’ān Majīd Mo’ar’ra Hinā shudah* [Henna-colored, unnoted translation of the elegant Qur’an],” *Madīnah*, 9 March 1917.

written by editors in the first issue of *Madīnah* published in May 1912, "This weekly newspaper is a comrade of the country, the soul of the community, the true faithful servants of the government, and a treasury of news, a storehouse of information and a garden of political and social topics."[57] *Madīnah* employed the Persian-derived word *mulk* or country in a proto-nationalist sense. The word expressed the sense of belonging circumscribed by current political realities while invoking the historic context of the Mughal Empire through its Persianate origins. The paper sought to further the interests of Muslim society through airing of views relevant to Muslims in print.

Introduction to Madīnah and Majīd Hasan

Madīnah's proprietor Majīd Hasan was born in Bijnor in 1883. Using a traditional syllabus, his father taught him Arabic using the Qur'an and Persian through Sa'adi's *Gulistān* and *Bustān*, as well as the *Sikandarnāmah*.[58] Although he left Bijnor to begin his training as a *qāẓī* or judge in Lahore, his *phūphā* 's[59] increasing frailty required him to abandon his studies to return to Bijnor to assist with the running of the family newspaper, *Saḥīfa*.[60] Following the death of his *phūphā*, Ahmad Hasan, Majīd Hasan stayed in Bijnor, caring for his aunt's children and continuing to run the newspaper. *Saḥīfa*'s popularity began to wane after 1910, during the period when Majīd Hasan married Mahatarmah Kanīz Fātimah, whose family was much more financially successful than his own.[61] At that point he dreamt of a bright moon shining in the sky. From behind the first moon, another moon appeared and drifted away from it, becoming brighter, larger, and more impressive than the first. Majīd Hasan interpreted

[57] *Madīnah*, 1 May 1912, 1.
[58] Adil, Parvez. Personal correspondence with author, 15 October 2013.
[59] The honourific *Phūphā* refers to the paternal aunt's husband
[60] Muneer Akhtar, personal conversation with author in Bijnor, 14-16 April 2013
[61] 'Abad Samī' ul-dīn, quoted in Adil, *Madinah Akhbar, Thesis Manuscript*, 46

this dream to mean that it was time for him to start his own paper. Hasan's level of education was unimpressive by early twentieth century standards. Not a "true" Maulwi, his achievements as a newspaper editor later conferred on him that honour. Abidullah Ghāzī has stated that the honour of addressing the *qaum* was conferred by the community itself, rather than in any qualification that Majīd Hasan had achieved.[62] With few connections, wealth, or even journalistic training it would be more accurate to say that Majīd Hasan built his publishing business from the ground up, motivated by considerable ambition. According to family history, his wife offered to sell her jewels to help Majīd Hasan start his own press enterprise in the form of *Madīnah.* Even with that money, the capital he used to start *Madīnah* was nominal.[63] Majīd Hasan described his condition when starting *Madīnah* as a desperate one: "Aside from sincerity, service, and trust in God, I had no other wealth."[64] First pressed through family obligation into the newspaper business, Majīd Hasan began *Madīnah* as his own entrepreneurial enterprise. His dream proved prophetic; *Madīnah* eclipsed *Saḥīfa* to become a prominent voice for Muslims and eventually a particular perspective of the nationalist cause associated with the Jami'at-ul-'Ulama. Majīd Hasan continued to work assiduously for the progress of *Madīnah* until his death in 1966.[65]

Majīd Hasan was the picture of pious health. Taking care to walk to the local mosque five times a day rain or shine, he demonstrated self-conscious perfection in all

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[62] Khāmah, *Intikhāb-i Muzāmin-i Dākţar 'Abd Ullah Ghāzī*, 11

[63] Farzanah Khalīl Mashmulah. *Roznāmah-yi 'Avām* (People's Daily). 30 January 1996. "That son of Bijnor who started up the newspaper *Madīnah* with so little capital, yet through his skill and worthiness made it into a distinguished Indian newspaper. Maulwi Sahab, through his prudence, discipline, order, and moderation it was taught that through belief in God a man can start a project with a small measure [of resources] and God will bestow good fortune and progress so that it can become an example for the entire world. Maulwi Majīd Hasan Sahab's newspaper *Madīnah* also became an example for the entire world." [Original in Urdu, translated by this author]

[64] Quoted by Farūqī, Zīyā al-Hasan. *Do Māhī* (Bimonthly). Lucknow. 1981. 74.; Cited in Adil, *Madinah Akhbar, Thesis Manuscript*, 30.

[65] Farzanah Khalīl Mashmulah. *Roznāmah-yi 'Avām* (People's Daily). 30 January 1996.

habits. Claiming Afghani heritage as a Shaikh, Majīd Hasan took great care with his appearance; wearing a crisp white kurta each day, he visited the barber twice weekly to maintain his trim beard and to cut his nails.[66] Careful to observe the correct method of ablution even in the dead of winter, Majīd Hasan set a high bar for moral conduct. A fan of simple food, he frowned on indulgence even among his children. In fulfilling his duties to the poor he was equally conscientious, living by the motto "if there be even a little money in your pocket, do not deny the questioner."[67] This fastidiousness in appearance and conduct translated into his work with *Madīnah*. From the early beginnings of the paper, Majīd Hasan worked on every aspect of *Madīnah*'s production: he wrote for the paper, proofread contributions, and assisted with the stencilling of the calligraphy on the lithographic stone before printing.[68] Known for his skill in calligraphy, he even took a hand to the stone press on occasion after pencilling in the impressions for printing.[69] In other words, Majīd Hasan's commitment to *Madīnah* was total.

Despite her illiteracy, Majīd Hasan's first wife Mahatarmah Kanīz Fātimah was an intelligent and capable assistant to *Madīnah*.[70] She was the daughter of a leading lawyer in Bijnor.[71] While maintaining strict purdah, she assisted in both big and small details of daily management. A woman renowned for her generosity, in the model of Asgharī in Nazir Ahmed's *Mirāt-ul Arus*, she assisted in arranging marriages of poor girls in her

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[66] 'Abad Samī' ul-dīn. Personal correspondence with Parvez Adil, 4 September 2008. Cited in Ibid.
[67] *jeib meiN chand paise bhī hoN to sā'il si inkār mat karo.* 'Abad Samī' ul-dīn. Personal correspondence with Parvez Adil. 4 September 2008. Cited in Ibid.
[68] Cited in Ibid.
[69] 'Abad Samī' ul-dīn, quoted in Ibid.
[70] 'Abad Samī' ul-dīn, quoted in Ibid.
[71] Khāmah, *Intikhāb-i Muzāmin-i Dākţar 'Abd Ullah Ghāzī*, 11.

neighbourhood.[72] Her deference towards her husband and children was legendary.[73] After her union with Majīd Hasan produced four daughters, she herself arranged her husband's second marriage to a daughter of a man named Tawhīd Hassan in order to secure a male heir. Majīd Hasan's second wife had two sons, including Syed Akhtar, the heir to Madīnah Press. [74]

Majīd Hasan's nephew, Munīr Akhtar Hasan, still lives in the house where Majīd Hasan ran Madīnah Press until the 1960s. In the lower level of the expansive bungalow a large portico housed the printing machinery, including a letterpress machine imported from Britain in its later years of printing.[75] Across from the portico in a separate room staff folded the freshly printed pages before delivery by railway post. The portico where the printing press used to hum now houses goats, chickens and roosters belonging to the family. Upstairs, Munir Akhtar and his two sons live in the high-ceilinged rooms where *Madīnah*'s series of editors along with its proprietor Maulana Majīd Hasan gathered to write and edit the newspaper.

Madīnah's contribution was built on its community of editors, sub-editors, and proprietors. All the editors of *Madīnah* were products of *qasbah* culture, and lived in Bijnor while employed by the publication. The editor regularly invited guests to contribute guest columns. When an editor took over the work of *Madīnah*, he resided in Bijnor or in the Hasan house, which also acted as the administrative office for

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[72] *Mirat-ul Arus* (The Bride's Mirror) was a book published by Nawāl Kishor Press in the 1880's by Nazir Ahmed. The book, inspired in part by similar texts in Victorian Britain, sought to encourage reform of Muslim women's education and manners. In *Mirat-ul Arus*, Nazir Ahmed compares the fates of two sisters. Akbarī, the eldest, personifies ignorance and greed. Asgharī, the younger sister, is a paragon of virtue. For an Urdu copy of the text see: Ahmed, Nazir. *Mir'at al-'urus*. (Lucknow: Nawal Kishore Press, 1881), accessed online May 2013, http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=OXVU1&docId=oxfaleph015518550.

[73] 'Abad Samī' ul-dīn, quoted in Adil, *Madinah Akhbar, Thesis Manuscript*, 30.

[74] Khāmah, *Intikhāb-i Muzāmin-i Dākṭar 'Abd Ullah Ghāzī*, 11

[75] Muneer Akhtar, personal conversation with author in Bijnor, 14-16 April 2013.

Madīnah.[76] In the newspaper, any unsigned article was written by one of the small editorial team, either an editor or the proprietor himself. Otherwise, guest contributors usually signed their name to contributions. Maulana Majīd Hasan's name, along with the name of the current editor, appeared on the title page.

Editors' names usually appeared on the cover of *Madīnah*, with the exception of periods when there was no official editor of the newspaper. Between the end of 1912 and the beginning 1913 when Nur ul-Hasan Zahinpuri temporarily departed as editor of the newspaper (he continued to contribute), *Madīnah* went without an official editor until M. Agha Rafīq Bulāndshahrī arrived on the scene.[77] Otherwise, the names of the editors and sub-editors were well documented in the paper. Although Majīd Hasan's proprietorship provided continuity for the newspaper, different editors influenced the tone and emphasis of the paper.

The roster of *Madīnah*'s editors demonstrates the newspaper's connections to *qasbah*s around Uttar Pradesh. *Madīnah*'s first and third editor was a Bijnor man by birth: Maulwi Syed Nur ul-Hasan Zahīn. *Madīnah* also referred to him as Maulwi Syed Nūr ul-Hasan Zahīn Karatpūrī, in reference to his birthplace, Kiratpur, a *qasbah* near the municipality Naginah.[78] Nūr ul-Hasan Zahīn, who was blind, famously interpreted dreams in addition to his work as a journalist. Like Maulana Majīd Hasan, *Madīnah*'s first editor was educated at a local madrasah in his *qasbah*. Renowned for his wisdom, rather than his education, his name drew a steady readership from the strata of *qasbah* society the newspaper sought to target. He assisted with the administrative management of the paper and editorials, while Majīd Hasan handled the writing of news

[76] Munir Hasan and Parvez Adil, personal conversation with author in Bijnor, 14-16 April 2013.
[77] *Madīnah*, 1 March 1913, 1.
[78] *Madīnah*, 12 May 1912, 1.; Adil, Parvez. Telephone conversation with author, 18-25 June 2013.

items and other general articles.[79] Hasan also composed poems occasionally under the takhallus or pen name Mattīn Bijnorī (or "True Bijnori Faith").[80] *Madīnah*'s first sub-editor, Syed Muhammad La'iq Hussain Qavi Zammarud-raqam Amrohavī, came from Amroha. His takhallus, translated as "emerald pen," referred to his calligraphic skill and poetic ambitions. His poetic works focused on the decline of Islam in an age of European influence.

M. Agha Rafīq Bulāndshahrī was editor between 1913 and 1915.[81] He was born in Bulāndshahr, a north-western district of Uttar Pradesh near Bijnor known as an exemplar of *sharīf* culture.[82] Agha Rafīq presided over the flourishing of *Madīnah*'s Women's Newspaper as well as *Madīnah*'s contribution to the Kanpur Mosque controversy of 1913, which saw the Urdu press transforming Muslim places of worship into monuments to spiritual and national identity.[83] In the first half of 1913, the municipal board in Kanpur prepared to destroy the outer part of a mosque in order to widen a road; the government specifically sought to destroy the *dalal* where worshippers conducted ritual ablution before their prayers. While not formally part of the mosque, Urdu newspapers, including *Madīnah*, *Al Hilāl*, *Comrade*, and *Zamindār*, spoke out against the destruction as an attack on the Muslim community. While *Madīnah* was not the first Urdu paper to comment on the Kanpur issue, it was

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[79] Adil, *Madinah Akhbar, Thesis Manuscript*, 52.
[80] Adil, *Madīnah Akhbār,* 64.; *Madīnah*, 18 April 1913, 9.
[81] *UPNNR*, 13 March 1915.
[82] Parvez Adil. Telephone conversation with author, 16 June 2013.; H.R. Nevill. *Bulāndshahr: a gazetteer.* Nevill, H. R., *Bulandshahr: A Gazetteer* (Allahabad: Supt., Govt. Press, 1903) ; For a more detailed exploration of Bulandhsher's architecture, which reveals elements of heritage present in the last half of the nineteenth century, see: Frederic Salmon Growse, *Indian architecture of to-day as exemplified in New buildings in the Bulāndshahr district* (Allahabad: North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1885-1886).
[83] Santhi Kavuri-Bauer, *Monumental Matters: The Power, Subjectivity, and Space of India* (London: Duke UP, 2011), 111-114.

instrumental in framing the destruction as an attack on the sacred space of Islam.[84] Agha Rafīq engaged in a discussion with English language newspapers as well. In September of that year he argued against the *Pioneer* newspaper's advice that Muslims refuse to see the construction project as an attack on their religious community. Under Agha Rafīq, *Madīnah* increased its position as a watchdog of Muslim sacred symbols. *Madīnah* attempted to transform the Urdu newspaper conversation into a representative of the Muslim community. Majīd Hasan and his editors continued to assert that *Madīnah* and other Urdu language newspapers had, like mosques, become monuments of import to the Muslim community.

In 1916 and 1917, once again under the editorship of Nūr ul-Hasan Zahīn, the typeface became denser, smoother in appearance, including more writing on fewer pages. The Women's Newspaper, however, had disappeared. In this period the war promoted a more intense focus on reporting regular news from the front; beginning in 1914, issues were published twice a week.

April 1917 marked the beginning of Editor Mazhar ud-Dīn Shairkoṭī's tenure. Shairkoṭī, a novelist as well as a journalist, was born in the Shairkoṭ *qasbah* of Bijnor in 1888. Initially educated by Maulana Abdul Qayūm Arshaq and Miyānji Sa'ad Allah Sahib, he attended Deoband as a pupil of Maulana Mahmud ul-Hasan Asīr Mālṭā, known as Shaikh ul-Hind.[85] After completing his education at Deoband, Mazhar ud-Dīn returned to Shairkoṭ, where he worked on the newspaper *Dastūr* under the management of Hakīm Asrār ul-Nabī. During this period he also worked on the newspaper *Nagīnah*. It was only after *Nagīnah*'s closure that Mazhar ud-Dīn began editing *Madīnah* on 28 April 1917 with an article on Qur'anic surahs. Maulana Majīd Hasan saw Mazhar ud-Dīn's

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[84] *Madīnah*, 23 April 1913.; Santhi Kavuri-Bauer, *Monumental Matters: The Power, Subjectivity, and Space of India* (London: Duke UP, 2011), 111-114.
[85] Adil, *Madīnah Akhbār*, 40.

affiliation with the newspaper as the beginning of a new period of commitment to the Muslim community.[86]

Interestingly, Majīd Hasan also wrote in his introduction of Mazhar ud-Dīn in *Madīnah* that he was sub-editor of the Calcutta newspaper *Al-Balāgh* (edited by Maulana Azad) and editor of the daily paper *Risālat*. Majīd Hasan's message was clear: He was bringing in a power player to man the ship of *Madīnah* during a crucial time for Muslims. Mazhar ud-Dīn, who transformed *Madīnah*'s approach to become a more political entity, associated with prominent Muslims of his age, including Syed Hasan Imām who presided over the Indian National Congress's consideration of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in Bombay in 1918.[87] His other associates included Nawab Muhammad Ismā'il Khān, a prominent member of the Muslim League during the Khilafat Movement who remained in India after Partition. Ismā'il Khan was a prominent member of the Muslim League until Independence and with Khaliquzzaman a key organizer of the UP Muslim League and its separatist drive. Descended from Nawab Mustafa Khan 'Shefta', the friend and patron of Ghalib, Khan lived at Mustafa Castle in Meerut. Mazhar ud-Dīn also associated with Syed Habīb Shāh, a Lahori Muslim who toured Northern Punjab as a member of the Khilafat Committee to mobilize support for pan-Islam.[88] According to Parvez Adil, Mazhar ud-Dīn Shairkoṭī shifted the centre of *Madīnah* and Majīd Hasan's attention towards politics.

After the end of the war in November 1918, discussions of independence and the fall-out of the war in India had begun in earnest.[89] Discussions of the state of Islam, as

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[86] The newspaper printed a list of words describing its ideological priorities on its header: "islāmī, sīyāsī, 'ilmī, akhlāqī, tamadanī." *Madīnah*, 28 April 1917, 3.; Quoted in Adil, *Madīnah Akhbār*, 40.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Satish Chandra Mittal. *Freedom Movement in Punjab, 1905-29 (*Punjab: Concept Pub. Company, 1977), 184.; Adil, *Madīnah Akhbār*, 40.
[89] "[First martyr in Freedom Movement]," *Madīnah*, 5 November 1918, 6.

well as the progress of both national and local branches of organizations such as the Muslim League and Congress, increased.[90] Gandhi appeared in several of these articles.[91] In addition, discussions of the fall-out of the First World War in Turkey and the Caliphate took centre stage.[92] In 1919 Mazhar ud-Dīn spelled out a clear connection between Indian Muslims and those in Turkey and other Muslim-dominated nations. [93]

Mazhar ud-Dīn presided over one of *Madīnah*'s dramatic conflicts with the British government after the Jallianwallabagh massacre. Mazhar ud-Dīn and Majīd Hasan renamed the newspaper *Yasrib*, the Arabic name for the city of *Madīnah*, briefly in August and September of 1919 in order to evade censorship by the British government.[94] *Madīnah* had been excluded from distribution in Panjab and Delhi because of its radical views, blaming government involvement, regarding the Jallianwallabagh massacre of April 1919.[95]

In April 1919 *Madīnah* published a previously mentioned article critical of the Government's involvement in the Jallianwallabagh Massacre, for which it received a

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[90] "*payām-i aman: sulah kānfarans kā in'eqād* [Message of Peace: The Holding of the District Conference]", *Madīnah*, 25 January 1919, 2.; "*Āll inḍia muslim līg aur maslah-yi khilāf*, [All India Muslim League and the issue of the Khilafat]" *Madīnah*, 9 October 1919.; "*vafād muslim līg kī tāzah 'arzdāsht be-khidmat vazīr-i 'āzim*," *Madīnah*, 9 October 1919, 5.
[91] "*gereftār aur mahātma gāndhī kā payām* [Arrest and the Message of Mahatma Gandhi]," *Madīnah*, 13 April 1919, 7.; "*mahātmā gāndhī amritsar meiN* [Mahatma Gandhi in Amritsar]," *Madīnah*, 13 November 1919, 5.
[92] "*maslah-yi turkī* [The Issue of Turkey: The speech of Honourable 'Iaqub Hassan]," *Madīnah*, 25 January 1919, 4.; "The daily life of the current Kaisar of Germany," *Madīnah*, 5 February 1919, 4. ; "[According to Turkey, the opinion of Major Pībal]," *Madīnah*, 5 February 1919, 5. ; "*khilāfah-yi aval kī tajārat-o sakhāvat* [The Economic Generosity of the First Caliphate]," *Madīnah*, 13 February 1919, 1.
[93] "*islām aur naishanalizam: islāmī qaumī-yi hurriyāt aur musāvat* [Islam and Nationalism: The Freedom and Equality of the Muslim Community]," *Madīnah*. 21 October 1919. 2.
[94] *Yasrib (Madīnah)*, 25 August, 1919.
[95] *UP Government Poll. Report for Fortnight Ending 30-4-1919* Internal Government Correspondence 1919.

warning.[96] The article, which the censor board excluded from circulation in the Panjab, minced few words:

> His honour O'Dwyer's government of Panjab, from the very beginning, kept as the foundation of its policy a despotic course of action. It is a source of great regret that the result of it is the current display [print unclear]. The Governor of Panjab on the 8th April gave a speech. His head, Sir Edward Maclagan came from England. 26 April he will arrive in India. And 30 April with his news-loving hands he will take the reins of government, which have committed such oppression as can never be forgotten in India, especially in Punjab.
>
> This was his honour O'Dwyer's last period of government; therefore it was necessary that he make amends for his past course of actions. This was the time when, while extinguishing the fire with the water of gentleness and kindness, he inflamed the hearts of the *ahl-i Panjāb*. But perhaps it could be said that he did not put out the fire with water but instead doused it with oil. If that were not the case, then why would he, at the conclusion of his reign, give such repellent orders, which were so far from affection that they approximated hate.[97]

Madīnah was not alone in discussing this event. On the contrary, newspapers conducted a vigorous conversation regarding Government action in the Panjab. The U.P. fortnightly report stated: "The occurrences in the Punjab […] practically absorbed the entire attention of the press. The responsibility has been unanimously assigned to the officials for giving unnecessary provocation by undue interference with peaceful demonstrations." The British also excluded *Al Khalīl* of Bijnor from distribution in the Panjab, along with *The Independent* of Allahabad (a Nehru paper), *Hamdam* and *Akhuwat* of Lucknow (Farangi Mahalli papers), *Swadesh* of Gorakhpur, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta. Censored newspapers, from which securities were demanded,

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[96] "UP Government Poll. Report for Fortnight Ending 30-4-1919." "UP Government Poll. Report for Fortnight Ending 30-4-1919."Internal Government Correspondence, UP, 1919).

[97] "*panjāb gavarnmanṭ kā ṯarz-i 'amal: lāhor-o-amritsar kī nāzak hālat panjāb kī khabroN par sansar muqarar dīyā gayā* [Panjab Government's course of action: The delicate condition of Lahore and Amritsar, censorship established for Panjab's newspapers], *Madīnah*, 18 April 1919.

included papers from Bengal, Nagpur, Lucknow, and Madras.[98] *Qasbah* papers and the newspapers of large urban newspapers posed equal risks to inflaming public opinion.

Madīnah's short tenure as *Yasrib* demonstrated its relevance to Indians' political opposition to the British, as well as the newspapers determination to flout British law. By the title of *Yasrib* an Iqbal couplet appeared on the cover of each issue:

> "The dirt of *Madīnah* is better than two 'ulama / Oh fortunate, beloved city"[99]

Significantly, this couplet set spiritual purity in opposition to learning. Embodied religious knowledge, as demonstrated by the soil of the city *Madīnah*, outweighed the intellect of religious men. On the one hand, this emphasis was ironic, since *Madīnah* repeatedly emphasized religious knowledge. On the other hand, *Madīnah*'s proprietor and editors were men who wore their few educational laurels lightly. More important than formal education was the ability to embody that knowledge through furthering the Muslim community. *Madīnah*'s much-lauded transformation into *Yasrib* was anticlimactic. Less than two weeks after an elaborate "welcome" to *Yasrib* had appeared, the newspaper once again reverted to its old name.[100] Presumably, the exclusion order had lapsed by this time. The renaming of the paper highlighted a significant altercation between Mazhar ud-Dīn's newspaper and the British, as well as an indicator of growing influence.

In the 1920's, *Madīnah* discussed issues relevant to both the Muslim League and the Congress Party in turn through its coverage, while increasingly demonstrating a

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[98] *UP Government Poll. Report for Fortnight Ending 30-4-1919* Internal Government Correspondence 1919.
[99] *Madīnah*, 13 September 1919, 1.
[100] For *khair-muqadam* or welcome, see: *Yasrib (Madīnah*), 13 September 1919, 1.; *Madīnah*. 21 May 1919, 1.

bias toward Congress.[101] After leaving *Madīnah* in 1921, Mazhar ud-Dīn joined Munshi Safīr Ahmed's Naginah-based paper *Almān* as its first editor. He was instrumental in relocating that paper to Delhi, where he became close to the leadership of the All-India Muslim League, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In the 1930's he founded a paper entitled *Vahdat* or "Unity", in addition to his existing paper *Almān*, in order to assist the propagation of Muslim League ideals. Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani, a Deobandi who supported the creation of Pakistan, resigned from the pro-Congress Jami'at-ul-'Ulama and declared his allegiance to the Muslim League and Jinnah from Mazhar ud-Dīn's office.[102] He was assassinated in 1939 while representing the Muslim League at conference on the Palestine issue; the reason was his support for the League. Muhammad Ali Jinnah wrote a letter, published in *Almān*, expressing his shock at Mazhar ud-Dīn's death, which he described as a loss to the country.[103] He was awarded posthumously a Pakistan Movement Gold Medal in 1989 for his efforts in promoting the founding of Pakistan.[104]

From 1917 onwards, *Madīnah*'s personality became more political, under the auspices of an editor who capitalized on that shift in direction. However, aside from its open political leaning, the newspaper still retained its emphasis on promoting a good life defined by the Qur'an, repeatedly justifying its arguments with *Islāh* or foundations of Islam. It is unclear why Mazhar ud-Dīn left *Madīnah* in 1921; editorships of newspapers could have a relatively short turnover period. It is also possible that Mazhar ud-Dīn's taste for politics pulled him closer to Delhi and the nexus of the nationalist movement after the political awakening that had accompanied the Khilafat

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[101] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1934.
[102] Mohammad Mohiuddin Qazi, *Thousand Year Struggle*.; Cited in: Adil, *Madīnah Akhbār*, 14.
[103] *Almān*, "[Martyr of the Community]," May 1939, 5.; Cited in: Adil, *Madīnah Akhbār*, 14.
[104] Qazi, *Thousand Year Struggle*, 262.

Movement.

After 1921, Moradabad-born Badarūl Hasan Jālālī, B.A., had taken up editorship of *Madīnah*. He was prosecuted in 1924 under section 124A of the Indian Penal Code as a result of an article he wrote on Kabul. Following his prosecution, he issued an apology and resigned his place as editor, although soon afterward he resumed his post. In the same year, Nasrulla Khan Aziz, B.A., a Punjabi in his early 40's, was named sub-editor. Before coming to *Madīnah* Aziz had worked on the staff of the *Sufi* in Punjab. By this time *Madīnah* newspaper already had a reputation for anti-British sentiment, affinity for Turkey, and antipathy to the Hindu-driven Shuddhi and Sangathan movements. Its influence was growing, especially in the Punjab, but still limited in Bijnor itself. [105]

In 1928 the editorship fell to 32-year-old Nurul Rahman. A B.A. graduate, zamindar, and a Shaikh, he hailed from Budaun and had served as a reporter for *Madīnah* in the 1920's before being appointed to its editorship. The sub-editor, named Mohammad Ahsan, also a Shaikh from Bacchraon *qasbah* in Amroha was an administrative clerk in government service.[106]

In 1929, Nasrullah Khan, B.A. of Gujranwala in the Punjab became editor. He was the son of Mohammad Sharif Ullah Khan. Mohammad Ahsan remained the sub-editor. In 1930, *Madīnah* was required to deposit a security under the Indian Press Act under Nasrullah Khan's editorship, indicating an increased determination to press the boundaries of press legislation in the service of nationalism. By 1934, *Madīnah* had once again been forced to deposit a security, this time under the Press Ordinance of 1931. More significantly, the paper had solidified its identity as a pro-Congress paper and

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[105] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1926.
[106] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1928.

even gained popularity at the local as well as national level.[107] Khan's reign as editor yielded yet more controversy, which reinforced its popularity among Muslim *ashrāf* readers. In 1935, the paper was forced to forfeit its 1,000-rupee security in punishment for an article harshly criticizing the government response to the Quetta earthquake.[108] *Madīnah* then complied with the government's demand for an additional 2,000-rupee deposit as a security against future violations. Nasrullah Khan, who had overseen *Madīnah*'s escalating penchant for nationalist drama and protest, remained the editor until the end of 1935, when 40 year-old Hamidul Ansari Ghazī rose to the editorship.

Ghazī, the son of M. Mansur Ansari, was a Shaikh of Ambhattā in the district Saharanpur. By 1937, the newspaper had settled into its identity as ideologically aligned with Congress newspaper and often critical of the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Shi'a community. Its opposition to these forces was only matched by its loyalty to the Jami'at-ul-'Ulama-i Hind and Deoband. Ghazī steered *Madīnah* over the next thirteen years.[109] As D.P. Mukherji, censor for the colonial government, observed, "It wields a great influence in all circles."[110] During Ghazī's tenure Majīd Hasan's dream had become a reality. While *Madīnah*'s manifestations post-independence are beyond the purview of this newspaper, the publication continued to be popular throughout North India. Majīd Hasan's family handled the running of the newspaper from its inception in 1912 until the last editor, Syed Hasan, stopped the presses of *Madīnah* for the last time in 1975.

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[107] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1934.
[108] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1935.
[109] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1936, 1950.
[110] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1936.

Circulation and Perception

Madīnah's circulation data provides hints regarding the nature of *qasbah* newspapers' readership and pool of contributors. Majīd Hasan made his declaration registering *Madīnah* for publication under section 4 of Act XXV of 1867 on July 10th, 1912.[111] The annual subscription fee at that time was 3 rupees, although the proprietor offered discounts to madrasahs and charged *zamindar*s slightly more due to their elevated circumstances.[112] Majīd Hasan had little local influence in 1912, although it was rumoured that he had been employed at a press in Punjab before returning to Bijnor." His primary role at Saḥīfa was looking after the children in the family.[113] After Hasan founded his own paper, colonial censors initially dismissed *Madīnah* as a "bigoted Muhammadam organ, inclined to make trouble between Hindus and Muhammadans." *Madīnah*'s criticism of the headmaster of Bijnor High School, as a result of his complying with the British Educational Code, irked colonial administrators. The only person of significance attached to the newspaper was *Madīnah's* most prominent journalist of the period, Nūr ul-Hasan Zahīn, who wrote for *Saḥīfa* as well.

Madīnah newspaper began with a circulation of 350 copies in 1912. In 1915, circulation increased to a modest 450.[114] With the advent of the Khilafat movement, *Madīnah* found its niche as a voice for political Muslims sympathetic to the Congress party. Majīd Hasan capitalized on his papers' involvement in Khilafat politics. By 1922, *Madīnah*'s circulation published 12,500 issues twice a week. Those circulation numbers made the paper the most widely distributed nationalist paper in any language in UP in that year. Only Kanpur's Hindi-language *Pratāp* (10,000) and *Hind Kesārī* (4000) gave

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[111] *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces*, 1913.
[112] *Madīnah*, 1 May 1912, 1.
[113] *List of Newspapers and Periodicals in the United Provinces*, 1913.
[114] *UPNNR*, 13 March 1915.

the paper any distant competition. In the space of a decade, *Madīnah* had become a successful publication. Looking forward from the period dealt with in this thesis, by 1927 its circulation had reduced to 6,500. In 1931, *Madīnah*'s circulation had levelled out at a respectable 6,000, overshadowed by the nationalist Hindi language *Pratāp* (Kanpur), *Bhavishya* (Allahabad), and *Chand* (Allahabad).[115] By the 1930's *Madīnah*'s circulation stood at 8,000, where it seems to have remained until the year following Partition.[116]

By the early 1920's, Majīd Hasan had established relationships to the editors of other leading newspapers in order to gain permission for the reprinting of columns from other publications; his newspaper regularly commented on and reprinted articles appearing in large urban papers, such as *Hamdard*, *Al Hilāl*, and *Zamindār*.[117] By 1917 *Madīnah* also stood in conversation with other *qasbah*-based newspapers as well.[118] He successfully attracted journalists and contributors of reliable star power. In 1922, at the tail end of the Khilafat movement, *Madīnah*'s captured its highest circulation numbers and consolidated its reading base across North and Central India. Having begun literally as a dream, by the 1920's and 1930's *Madīnah* had grown into one of the most

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[115] Pandey, *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh 1926-1934: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization*, 64.
[116] Director of Criminal Intelligence, *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1936, 1950.
[117] e.g. An editorial in *Madīnah* commented on a column printed in *Hamdard* proposing an Indian mission to Arabia in July 1913, *Madīnah*, 15 July 1913.; In September 1913, *Madīnah* reprinted a poem from *Hamdard* (Delhi) encouraging Muslims to protest against the destruction of the mosque at Kanpur, *Madīnah*, 15/22 September 1913.; *Madīnah* reprinted a poem in *Zāmindār* (Lahore) attributing the spread of atheism to modern science, *Madīnah*, 15/22 September 1913.; *Madīnah* reprinted a poem by Maulana Shibli entitled "Equality in Islam" from *Al Hilal* (Calcutta), advocating the principle of equality in Islam, *Madīnah*, 8 October 1913.; *Madīnah* reproduced another poem published in *Hamdard* objecting to the Nawab of Rampur's October 1913 meeting attempting to represent the voice of Muslims, *Madīnah*, 8 October 1913.; In 1917, *Madīnah* reproduced an article from *Sidaqat* (Calcutta) in order to refute its claim that a Turkish court-martial had pronounced a death sentence on the Egyptian Sultan, *Madīnah*, 1 January 1917.
[118] October 1917 *Madīnah* reproduced a poem contesting the government's refusal to release Muhammad 'Ali and Shaukat 'Ali, *Madīnah*, 17 October 1917.

influential papers of dissent in India.[119] It remained a significant influence until independence, judging from its consistently high circulation, anecdotal evidence of *sharīf* Muslims attesting to the newspapers prevalence in their youth, and the Simon Commission's identification of the paper as a source of nationalist sentiment.[120] The strength of the *qasbah* newspaper derived from its relative isolation, the small numbers of initial publication, and initially ambivalent attitude toward colonial power, which while irksome to colonial censors initially evaded the measures meted out to large urban publications. The particular placement of the *qasbah* provided a space, both literal and abstract, for a conversation regarding the place of Islam, the *ashrāf*, and incipient nationalism to thrive.

Although beyond the scope of the time period identified for this thesis, *Madīnah*'s influence continued to grow in the 1930's and 1940's. An anecdote in the autobiography of Maulana Zakariya mentions that Maulana Hasan Madani while in Lahore in 1938 objected to a letter to the editor published in *Madīnah*, initiating a meeting between *Madīnah*'s editors and concerned scholars to submit a correction in the newspaper.[121] Madani's concern reflected *Madīnah*'s currency among literate Muslims, and Zakariya's anecdote demonstrates that *sharīf*, *qasbah*-born Muslims were those most likely to engage with *Madīnah*'s contents. Other letters to the editor and contributing articles demonstrated an attempt to reach out to a readership embodying contemporary *sharīf* values of religious and vernacular education and reforms, as well as concerns with obtaining government patronage.

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[119] Pandey, *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh 1926-1934: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization*, 64.
[120] *Memorandum submitted by the Government of the United Provinces to the Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. IX (London: Indian Statutory Commission, 1930), 209. OP-RC/116A. BL.
[121] Muhammad Zakariya Kandhlavi, *Aap Beti* (Lahore: Darul Isha'at, 2003).

Consistency and Dissent

From its inception the newspaper took its role as a source of information and guidance to its readers seriously. *Madīnah* particularly emphasized punctuality and consistency in arrival. Twice the newspaper experienced irregularities in its distribution, in 1913 and 1916. The delayed issue of 22 April 1913, sent three days late due to Hasan's illness, came accompanied with a profuse apology.[122] In 1916, *Madīnah* released twice in one week because of scheduling problems and a desire to release fresh news of World War I in a timely manner. Majīd Hasan explained the anomaly in a lengthy article, eager to emphasize that *Madīnah* usually ran to schedule.[123] When *Madīnah* threatened to run late a third time, a year later in 1917, Majīd Hasan averted the crisis through quick thinking. In November 1917, Majīd Hasan's delayed return from a gathering in Lucknow threatened the timely publication of the newspaper. The issue awaited his contribution, which was lost in transit. In the dead of night Majīd Hasan sat and wrote the article again from scratch, demonstrating absolute commitment to deliver timely news to his readers. After all, he wrote, "a newspaper should publish on its own time, not when the sun rises." [124] Hasan's punctuality and reliability became a calling card.

Madīnah was widely read in the province's capital city, Lucknow, in the 1930's and 1940's, helping to shape readers' political education. [125] Although in 1910 and 1911 *Madīnah* had little influence, by 1912 it was apparent by its subjection to regular surveillance that the newspaper had already established itself. The increasing

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[122] *Madīnah*, 8 May 1913, 5.
[123] "*Akhbār Medīnah mein Hafte mein do bār* [*Medīnah* newspaper twice in one week]." *Madīnah*, 1 December 1916.
[124] *Madīnah*, 5 November 1917, 3.
[125] Adil, *Madīnah Akhbār*, 14.

frequency of surveillance of both *Madīnah* and *Saḥīfa* points to the growing influence of *Madīnah* up to 1917 and beyond. In keeping with Maulana Majīd Hasan's dream, *Madīnah* outshone its predecessor. *Madīnah* and *Saḥīfa* both remained relatively well-known papers among *sharīf* Urdu speakers in Lucknow, Delhi, and *qasbah*s around North India.[126] Judging from later departures in tone and political approach, it is likely that Hasan passed over the reins of *Saḥīfa* to other editors.

Before and after 1900, *qasbah* publications in Urdu targeted content to *ashrāf* landowners of the area through their emphasis on agricultural issues. Prior to 1910, these publications in Bijnor tended to deal with agricultural issues exclusively, with circulation limited to the local area. These readers would have been both Muslim and Hindu, since Kayasth Hindus were also landowners and *ashrāf*. *Madīnah* was remarkable for its tendency to self-consciously market itself to *sharīf* North Indian Muslims through its use of Persianate Urdu, references to North Indian cultural practices, and tendency to identify its readers in contrast to Muslims from other areas of India.[127] This trend was indicative of a broader trend across *qasbah*s in North India. Authors listed *Madīnah* came from *qasbah*s scattered across the United Provinces, including Amroha, Deoband, Basti, Etawah, Shairkoṭ, and Bacchraon. Advertisements in *Madīnah* as early as 1912 sold goods from stores located as far afield as Bombay, Lahore, and Karachi. Maulana Zakarīya's autobiography also mentions *Madīnah*'s distribution in Lahore in 1938.[128] Among North-Indian *sharīf* Muslims, *Madīnah*'s

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[126] Nur-ul Hasan Rashid. Personal conversation in Kandhala, India, April 2013.
[127] A serialized article on the people of Assam reviews in detail how Assamese women are different from other Indian women, including the horrible smell of the food that they prepare and the strange way that they dress their hair. Despite these observations, the editors encourage female readers to accept Assamese women into the kinship group if their brothers choose an Assamese wife. "[Sayām: Part II]," *Madīnah*, 1 October 1913, 8 ; "[Sayām: Part I]," *Madīnah*, 22 October 1913, 9.
[128] Ibid..

reputation as a pro-Congress, anti-Muslim League paper was well established by Independence.

Several of the *qasbah*s that produced Bijnor's editors and readers, including Bulāndshahr and Bijnor, still exemplify extreme levels of poverty.[129] Several *qasbah*s, still revered as a place where a certain type of traditional Muslim identity is preserved, demonstrate low levels of economic and educational success. In the period between 1912 and 1924 it was the same isolation from the influence of urban culture and colonial influence that *Madīnah* used to set the Bijnor context aside as an exemplar for other North Indian Muslims. It embraced its identity as a place apart from the ravages of modern, urban society that risked eroding the force of Islam.[130]

This response stands in contrast to the tendencies of Urdu newspapers in larger urban centres of the period that commented on *Angāre*, including Aligarh's *Payām, Sarguzāsht,* which published columns opposing the irreverence of the book but encouraging religious leaders to have faith in the strength of spiritual truth, rather than petitioning the government to limit the free speech of those who published the book.[131] These other newspapers criticized reactions such as that found in *Madīnah*, correctly identifying the source of its protestations as anxiety regarding the place of religion in modern life. *Madīnah* stood apart from newspapers in large cities in its insistence on the preservation of what was increasingly seen as a lost way of life. It is this self-identified role as the preserver of culture which would have appealed to readers in search of a touchstone in tumultuous times.

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[129] "Identity of Minority Concentration Districts," Press Information Bureau, Government of India Website, accessed on 16 June 2013, http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=28770.
[130] *Madīnah*, 13 February 1933, 1.
[131] Ibid., 449.

It is important to ask whether *Madīnah*'s emphasis on *qasbah* identity and the *ashrāf* distinction reflected a general trend among *qasbah* newspapers or newspapers generally, or instead demonstrated a departure from the norm. By providing news of the same standard as papers in large cities, *Madīnah* and other *qasbah* based newspapers, including *Zulqarnain*, *Naginah*, and *Dastūr* set themselves apart from the previous incarnation of the *qasbah* newspaper, which focused on local, agricultural matters.[132] One aspect of *Madīnah*'s self-presentation was its emphasis on the *qasbah* as a preserver of Muslim tradition in the decades preceding independence, while offering high-quality news. While *qasbah* newspapers shared with urban centre papers an emphasis on the *ashrāf* as a social category, they were distinctive in couching their credibility in part on geographical placement in the *qasbah.* Furthermore, the embrace by *qasbah* newspapers of a newspaper conversation that no longer focused on local, agricultural news, but increasingly dealt with issues of national and international importance, signalled the arrival of a new voice into the Urdu public. This voice reflected particular concerns of the *ashrāf* with strong ties to *qasbah* life, including the place of religion in politics, maintenance of an Indo-Persian tie, and the importance of Urdu as embodying that tradition.

It is also important to determine to what extent these newspapers were monoliths, expressing a coherent party line that transformed over time, and to what extent they acted as marketplaces of ideas. *Madīnah* thrived through active interaction with a web of other Urdu publications in North India, which all maintained and severed alliances in turn according to the local interests of its editors. *Madīnah*, *Zulqarnain*, and other *qasbah* newspapers were certainly not monoliths; they did not imbibe a party line

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[132] Director of Criminal Intelligence. *Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces during the Year 1912 [with Index]*. Simla: Government Central Branch Press, 1913.

and transmit it unfiltered to a local and national audience. Newspapers' character and focus transformed from editor to editor, sometimes publishing conflicting views on specific issues to cultivate a rich conversation. At the same time, newspapers did demonstrate consistencies. The proprietorship of *Madīnah* stayed in the hands of a single family, the Hasan family, until it closed. *Madīnah* became a recognizable, distinctive publication as one that represented Muslim ideals from the *qasbah* context. To further underline the sense of the newspaper as the voice of a single editorial line, very few of the prose entries of the newspaper were signed (poetry contributions almost always appeared with authorial appellation, however). If *Madīnah* represented the voice of a single, Muslim, community, it did so by affirming the necessity for debate and accommodated to evolving local concerns and the priorities of specific editors.

Madīnah: Arbitrating the Voice of Muslims

Madīnah's opinion articles and news coverage demonstrated an awareness of other Urdu, Hindi, and English language papers. For this reason, the target audience of the paper varies. In some contexts, it is clear that the Muslim *qaum* is the chosen audience for the conversation; in these cases an awareness of other Urdu newspapers is assumed. In other situations, it seems that *Madīnah* was acutely aware that the British were watching the vernacular press closely, and targeted their arguments to that context. *Madīnah*, like many Urdu newspapers aware of different audiences, was polyphonic. It operated in several registers at once in order to target a variety of audiences.

Madīnah was self-conscious about the difficulties that Muslims faced in deciding which voices to privilege in the burgeoning press debate regarding their cultural and religious identity. *Madīnah* published articles discussing the difficulty Muslims

(particularly women) faced in deciding between conflicting opinions. Acknowledging women's tendency to maintain "full and a true devotion to one's leader (*rahbar*)" while navigating worldly and religious challenges, the newspaper encouraged women to turn away from individual guides and towards the consensus of the *qaum* as a guide in making decisions. A 1913 editorial suggested that instead of making decisions through deference to a guide, women (and presumably all Muslims) should trust in the foundational principles of the *qaum*.[133] The editorial line attempted to guide readers away from individual leaders, and towards faith in the consensus of the Muslim community. *Madīnah*, as the representative of that community, was perfectly placed to offer that guidance.

Madīnah's proprietor and editors regularly spoke out against the enforcement of the Press Act against the "Muhammadan Press" and prominent Muslims.[134] This sort of activism attempted with limited success to establish the newspaper discourse as a representative voice of the community, and therefore an essential space for Muslims. Protests against censorship published in *Madīnah* illustrated its attempt to establish the Urdu press as an embodiment of the *qaum.*

While the act of exclusion by the British in 1919 was never discussed openly in *Madīnah*, instances of other newspapers undergoing censorship do reach centre stage. These discussions make clear that Urdu newspapers generally remained an important repository of Muslim identity. When the *Zamindār* lost its appeal against British censorship, *Madīnah* criticized the decision as an act of bias against its former owner, Mr. Zafar 'Alī Khān. Aside from logical arguments, however, *Madīnah* based its support of *Zamindār* on the link between that newspaper and the identity of the Muslim

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[133] "*masturāt: kis tarah tarqī karein? Kaunsī ra'e ko sahīh samajhein aur kispar 'amal karein?*" *Madīnah*, 22 Jan 1913.
[134] *UPNNR*, 22 November 1914.; *UPNNR*, 15 May 1915.

community in India. *Madīnah* asserted that *Zamindār* "is the property of the Muhammadan community, and that any loss to the *Zamindār* means loss to the community."[135] In a similar way, articles in *Saḥīfa* expressed dismay when the Press Act censured *Sirajul Akhbār* (Jhelum) and other newspapers.[136]

Articles published by editors and contributors to *Madīnah* demonstrated an awareness of and engagement with other newspapers published during the period. Maulana Abu Syed Arabi wrote a 1914 editorial to contradict various erroneous statements written regarding Taufiq Bey, a prominent pan-Islamist, who toured India in early 1914. In addition, Arabi contradicted a statement published in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* that Hafiz Wahbi was the chief editor of a newspaper called *Al Haq Yalu* and that Taufiq Bey was the editor of the *Sabilul Irshād*.[137] Arabi also sent a direct message to the editor of *Paisa Akhbār*, which had published an account of the Indian police following an Indian to Egypt, asking for more details regarding the story. In this way *Madīnah* policed other Urdu newspapers for factual accuracy and also reinforced, through the request to *Paisah Akhbār,* the expectation that newspaper editors should remain acutely aware of developments in other Urdu publications. In a similar vein, *Saḥīfa*'s editors deplored attacks against the Raja of Mahmudabad by the *Paisa Akhbār* (Lahore), *Al Bashīr* (Etawah), *'Alī Mizān* (Aligarh), and the *Mashriq* (Gorakhpur).[138] *Madīnah* did not limit its surveillance to Urdu language papers; refuting the Calcutta *Englishman*'s

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[135] *UPNNR*, 1 July 1914.
[136] *UPNNR*, 19 February 1916.
[137] *UPNNR*, 1 January 1914.
"4. The *Medina* (Bijnor) of the 15th January 1914 (received on the 19th January), reproduces extracts from Maulānā Abu Saied Arabi's letter to the editor, in which the Maulānā refers to the erroneous remarks of the Urdu papers about Tewfik Bey (sic) who is at present touring in India, and observes that the gentleman is not the editor of the *Sabilul Irshad*, nor is Hafiz Wahbi the chief editor of *Al Haq Yalu*, as given out by the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*.
He refers to a notification in the *Paisa Akhbār* (Lahore) that the Indian Police had followed some Indian to Egypt, and asks the editor to let him know if possible the name of the Indian referred to."
[138] *UPNNR*, 26 July 1915.

criticism of the U.S. Government, which accused President Wilson of inaction by refusing to enter into World War I, the *qasbah* newspaper asserted its right to enter into conversation with any publicly available periodical, in any language.[139] Concerned at the risk posed to the well being of Turkish Muslims if America were to enter the fray, *Madīnah* sought to reduce pressure on the U.S. to enter World War I. In surveillance of other newspapers *Madīnah* established its own credibility on social and political issues, in contrast to other Urdu language papers. At the same time, concern with reporting in other Urdu newspapers indicated an attempt to present the press as constitutive of Indian Muslim identity. *Madīnah* also occasionally expressed awareness of Hindi language publications, usually in reference to debates regarding cow sacrifice, educational funding, or political debate.

Conclusion

Madīnah and other Urdu newspapers based in *qasbah*s sought to establish the Urdu newspaper community as a representative voice for the Muslim *qaum.* In so doing, it attempted to enshrine the newspaper conversation as an abstract ideal worthy of both protection and patronage. This transformation of the Urdu newspaper community into a representative space expressed itself in two ways: First, *qasbah* based newspapers demonstrated a tendency to police other Urdu and English language newspapers in order to affirm its own credibility on the national stage and to maintain high standards of Muslim journalistic integrity. Second, newspapers in *qasbah*s developed a distinctive, sophisticated theory of journalistic integrity, which focused on protecting real Muslim interests in education, business, and physical geographic space.

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[139] *UPNNR*, 15 January 1916.

This self-awareness among *qasbah* publications as a public conversation and their attempt to valorise that conversation as a necessary component of Muslim identity, highlighted the growing importance of the newspaper in *qasbah*s and urban centres alike.

Chapter 4:

Qasbatī Ashrāf through the lens of Islam

paj āfat nah rasad gū shah-yi tanhā-yi rā[1]

In the 1910's, interactions between scholars and secular Muslim elites in Lucknow, Bombay, and Delhi reflected a polarization of secular political objectives and the aims of the 'ulama, who favoured separatist policies.[2] The most prominent *qasbah* of the period, Deoband, stood apart from explicitly political conversations in 1916 and 1917; scholarship has long held that their interests were at odds with those of activists promoting broader political aims.[3] Yet by 1920 'ulama had risen to prominence in political activism surrounding the Khilafat movement, and to a great extent continued to define political Muslim identity even following the movement's collapse.[4] Newspapers based in *qasbah*s acted as one of the first public forums placing the voices of 'ulama with secular representatives of broader political goals; these publications expanded the reach of information regarding both groups to literate *ashrāf* in *qasbah*s who were later inclined to pursue local political power (or instance, Majīd Hasan was a man of no property and little wealth when he started *Madīnah* in 1912; within fifteen years, he sat on the municipal board of Bijnor and associated with politicians of national import). The *ashrāf* represented by the editors of newspapers such as *Madīnah* reflected the growth of a section of the

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[1] "The fortress of solitude encounters no calamity" (My translation); "No calamity will reach the seclusion of solitude." Quote printed in *Madīnah* in response to the publication of *Angāre*. Translation by Mahmud Shabana, "Angāre and the Founding of the Progressive Writers' Association," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, 2, 448.
[2] Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, 20.
[3] Ibid., 288.
[4] Ibid., 353.

ashrāf whose title *Maulana* reflected a middle-class ethic of achievement, measured by success in trade as much as by inheritance or scholarship; Majīd Hasan was one of a growing section of the *ashrāf* who occupied a public space between the 'ulama, who remained above the political fray, and activists who furthered the political objectives of Congress and the Muslim League. Majīd Hasan offered *Madīnah* as a forum for both sets of voices, setting them beside each other as members of the same conversation. The conversation of the *ashrāf* of Bijnor *qasbah*, captured in *Madīnah* newspaper, reflected a persistent suspicion of political Islam and Hindu interests, in contrast to the English-educated members of the Muslim League's progressive section, who sought secular political reform; at the same time, this conversation demonstrated the increasing anxiety of the representative of the landed *ashrāf*, no longer confident in the government's ability to care for them.[5] The newspaper *Madīnah* was a forum for parties old and new, as well as that of the madrasah-educated 'ulama in *qasbah*s, brought together publicly, perhaps for the first time, by the common bond of Sunni Islam (diversely interpreted) and its importance in public life.

The *ashrāf* of Delhi and Lucknow had not abandoned what Margrit Pernau has called the "respectability of descent" but had become increasingly aligned with the "middle-class virtue of achievement."[6] While this trend expressed itself in *qasbah*s also, the delayed arrival of the telegraph, railway to the *qasbah* and the retention of Mughal-era administrative bureaucracy to a greater extent crystallized the importance of descent as a marker of status. The formation of printing presses and newspaper publications was one expression of social status independent from imperial patronage post-1857. Nostalgia for

[5] Ibid., 175-178, 190-191.
[6] Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth-Century Delhi*, 240-2.

Mughal-period nobility and prestige among newspaper editors who often also held local government positions remained, however. The Urdu-educated *ashrāf* (often, but not always, Muslim) living in *qasbah*s between 1912 and 1924 were a particular social status group that occupied a liminal space between privilege and poverty. *Madīnah*'s editorials and articles emphasized reliance on scholarly guidance to interpret Islamic principles, even as it published advertisements for personal copies of the *Qur'an* and sought to distribute copies of the paper to as many readers as possible. The last to benefit from the revolutionary technologies of the telegraph and the railroad, yet continuing to benefit from the prestige of long-standing kinship networks, *qasbatī*s who ran or edited newspapers offer a glimpse to historians of *ashrāf* adept at balancing today what may seem like contradictory obligations to exclusionary prestige and popular appeal. The *qasbatī ashrāf* in their involvement in the newspaper industry remained simultaneously adept at trade[7] and devoted to the continued preservation of lineage and traditional modes of knowledge transmission. Newspapers such as *Madīnah* continued to promote lithograph technology and traditional calligraphy style as banners of authenticity; its *qasbah* origins appealed to an Urdu reading public in flux.

The newspapers read and produced in *qasbah*s reflected the growing strength of a tension within the *ashrāf*, between those willing to associate secular political power with Islam, and those deeply suspicious of secular aims. The latter, often associated with Deobandi 'ulama, held that since rule by sharia in India was impossible, that the Muslim community should continue to govern itself in the private space as defined by colonial-era

[7] Pernau's analysis demonstrates how the *ashrāf*'s alignment with trade industries and distancing from the nobility created a new ethic of achievement, which she relates to a middle class mentality. Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes*, 257.

laws, with the hope of expanding the reach of that space over time. By 1920 *ashrāf* norms of comportment, use of Urdu and Persian, and affinity to *qasbah* life were overwhelmingly associated with Islam. In contrast, only half a century before *ashrāf* identity was more closely linked with Mughal service, education, and patronage of the arts rather than religious identity. The fifty years following 1857 saw divergent attitudes toward Islam among the *qasbah* and the *ashrāf* community. One of the links between these two streams remains newspapers like *Madīnah* with close ties to the world of both.

Readings of *Madīnah*, a significant *qasbah* newspaper, trace attitudes towards Islam and public life among *ashrāf* Muslims either based in *qasbah*s or with significant kinship ties to that environment. Reading the newspaper can also offer understanding into discourse relating to the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars contributed to a sense of Muslim community among the *ashrāf*, and as a result assisted in building the foundation for the Khilafat Movement. The publication of *Madīnah* marked a broader shift in Bijnor *qasbah* from newspapers targeting a general *ashrāf* readership to cultivating a specifically Muslim *ashrāf* readership. This process of conflating the local *ashrāf* identity with Islam in print began in earnest after the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-1912 and continued over the ensuing decade.

Bose and Jalal have already observed that the genius behind Gandhi's campaign for Hindu-Muslim unity lay in the implicit affirmation of boundaries between religious cultures.[8] Gandhi explained his motivation for Hindu-Muslim cooperation in his *swaraj* campaign of 1920 in a few different ways. On the one hand, he held that Indian Muslims were justified in their campaign against dismantling the Caliphate by both rational

[8] Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004), 113.

argument and the Qur'an. Secondly, he supported the Khilafat cause "because, in laying down my life for the Khilafat, I ensure the safety of the cow, that is my religion, from the Mussalman knife."[9] By cooperating in a mutually beneficial campaign supporting a specifically Muslim cause, Hindus would then ensure their protection as a discrete religious community. According to this logic, Hindus and Muslims needed to work together because "only by Swaraj is the safety of our respective faiths possible."

Language in *Madīnah* reflected a concern to ensure the boundaries of a discrete Muslim identity, potentially as a result of the desire to present a united front at the bargaining table. Despite the fact that many Hindus also spoke Urdu in the first half of the twentieth century (the 1911 Bijnor gazetteer stated "there is no district in the United Provinces in which Urdu is more widely spoken, both by the peasants and the educated classes")[10] from its inception *Madīnah* reflected a move to appeal to Urdu-speaking Muslims specifically. This was reflected in the newspaper's content. For instance, poems of encomium to the prophet and editorials praising Islam defined by a conservative Sunni metric were scattered throughout *Madīnah*.[11] Of course it is important to keep in mind that Islam was not the only identity-constitutive thread for Muslim *ashrāf* writing in and editing *Madīnah*. The newspaper also reflected economic, social, and cultural concerns that had little direct relevance to the Muslim League or the Khilafat Movement, but nevertheless influenced the livelihood of the *Madīnah*'s readership. I have attempted to draw out the significance of some of these concurrent threads, such as gender issues and financial concerns related to the railways, in my other chapters. This chapter underlines the role of

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[9] Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 113.
[10] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 106.
[11] e.g. "*maulwī faiz muhammad sāhib*," *Madīnah*, 17 February 1917.; "*kashish-i islām*," *Madīnah*, 17 February 1917.; "*assalam 'alaikum*," *Madīnah*, 21 February 1917.

Islamic discourse in *Madīnah* and its dialogue with readership relating to its Muslim "identity." I use identity in quotation marks here to make clear that in my references to identity I am not referring to a static concept, but instead a product of the constantly mobile dialogue of which *Madīnah* was an essential part.[12] While I do not always employ quotation marks when discussing identity as a practical measure, this emphasis on constant fluctuation is maintained.

Ashrāf Beyond Islam

While in the Islamic world ancestral heritage influenced membership in the *ashrāf* social status group, in India the Mughals' need for administrative servants outweighed purity of heritage as criteria for advancement. According to roughshod divisions explained in nineteenth century texts such as the 1832 *Qānūn-i Islām*, Muslim society in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was divided into "respectable" or *ashrāf* people and the "common" people or *ajlaf*.[13] Typically *ashrāf* identity denoted immigrant status, claims to immigrant ancestry, or high-caste associations in tandem with Indo-Persian educational tradition. *Ajlaf* on the other hand were converts or low-caste Hindus.[14] Texts in the nineteenth century when discussing the *ashrāf* tended to focus on Hindu or Muslim categories, underplaying those social categories which lay at the centre of a matrix of social indicators, like the category of *ashrāf*.

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[12] Margrit Pernau's excellent discussion of identity has been influential here. Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes*, 1-22.
[13] Ja'far Sharīf, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, ed. G.A. Herčklots (London: Parbury, Allen, and co, 1832).
[14] Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes*, 58-86.

High-caste Hindu converts won membership in the *ashrāf* social status group through administrative appointments and subsequent land awards.[15] Mastery of Persian was one of the ways that Kayasths, Khatris, and Brahmans demonstrated their fluency in the *ashrāf* culture. Tracing the wide circle of influence of the Persian language during the height of the Mughal Empire is a useful way to discern the extent to which Hindi-speaking communities also established themselves as government servants.[16] The Kayasths and the Khatris particularly were known as "great north Indian scribal castes."[17] Brahmans also often swelled the ranks of administrative servants, even after Akbar first proclaimed Persian (instead of Hindavi) the official language of government. While Islam was certainly an important author of *ashrāf* cultural and social practices, *ashrāf* identities drew from multiple sources, the official state religion of the Mughal Empire being only one of those. More important than religious identification or heritage, at the level of local administration linguistic ability and cultural fluency were the measure of worth[18] and ultimately membership in the *ashrāf* social status group. This second attitude acknowledges that while Islam was influential in the development of *adab* and *akhlāq*, the norms of

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[15] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004), 61-72.; Imtiaz Ahmad, "The Ashraf-Ajlaf Dichotomy in Muslim Social Structure in India," *Indian Economic Social History Review* Vol. 3 (1966).; Edward Blunt, *The Caste System of Northern India: With Special Reference to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (London: Oxford UP, 1931).

[16] Alam and Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi," 313.; Muzaffar Alam, "The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon I. Pollock (London: U of California P, 2003), 159-171.

[17] J.F. Richards, "Norms of Comportment among Imperial Mughal Officers," in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of* Adab *in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (London: U of California P, 1984), 255.

[18] Alam and Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi," 313-315.

comportment characteristic of the *ashrāf* were influenced by a myriad of other factors, including social standing, kinship networks, and gender.[19]

I would like to add to this more nuanced perspective the importance of geographic placement, particularly the influence of the *qasbah* environment on the compressing of *ashrāf* identity in the early twentieth century to exclude high-caste Hindu groups and Hindu converts. Just as a shift from Mughal power to British hegemony was marked by a transformation in news writing,[20] so was the shift of Muslim strongholds of "identity" from large urban areas to *qasbah*s reflected in print media, particularly newspapers. While this emphasis on the *qasbah* is closely related to the importance of kinship networks, this shoring-up process conducted in *qasbah*s transformed attitudes of the *ashrāf* toward their own identity in the process. I will make an argument for the importance of the *qasbah* in redefining *ashrāf* as a dominantly Muslim social status group using newspapers in the early twentieth century. This redefinition as expressed in print media discourse was influential both in conjuring a spirit of nationalist cooperation with the Congress Party in the parallel development of what would later be called "communal" identities.

The Akhbār Navīs Tradition

The method of knowledge exchange dating from the height of the Mughal Empire to the dominance of the East India Company, from 15th until the nineteenth centuries, enabled the recognition and employment of clerks who gathered information about the central court for communication to courtiers. From the 16th century Emperor Akbar established

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[19] Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes*.
[20] Michael H. Fisher, "The Office of Akhbār Nawīs: The Transition from Mughal to British Forms," *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1 (1993), 45-46.

the practice of clerks' recording court diaries for the reference of government servants and to reflect the emperor's symbolic significance as the embodied spirit of the empire. Also common from the period of Akbar's rule was the appointment of news writers called *akhbār navīs* by either an individual or a group of "subscribers" who collected records at the central court for communication to Mughal outposts. In this way regional leaders and interested parties tracked developments at the imperial centre without jeopardizing control over state matters at home. Kinship groups associated with the role of *akhbār navīs* correlated with trends in the *ashrāf* more generally. Many of these *akhbār navīs* or *wāqī 'a navīs* would have been of Central Asian heritage and Muslim. The eighteenth century Marathas powers' collection of *akhbārāt* reveals that most *akhbār navīs* under Peshwā rule hailed from "Islamized" Hindu castes - Kayasth and Khatri – known for their membership in the scribal elite.[21]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Company adopted the network of *akhbār navīs* established in the Mughal Period. The British eventually institutionalized and bureaucratized the system to suit their purposes. By the early twentieth century, however, the British had come to depend on newspapers to do the type of information-gathering legwork that *akhbār navīs* had done previously.[22] At the same time, newspapers in the twentieth century, including *Madīnah*, self-consciously claimed the tradition of the *akhbār navīs* for themselves. Fisher has pointed out that Persian and then Urdu newspapers of the nineteenth and twentieth century claimed a link to the heritage of the *akhbār navīs* in three main ways. First articles in these newspapers incorporated the term "*akhbār*" into the title of the publication. *Madīnah* always referred to itself as *Madīnah akhbār* in the newspaper

[21] Fisher, "The Office of Akhbār Nawīs," 47-48, 54.
[22] Ibid., 20.

by-lines and editorials, establishing a verbal link between the tradition of knowledge transferal dating back to the Mughal period and the publication printed in Bijnor. Second, published articles often referred to the "*akhbār*" of specific locations when reporting news from other localities. *Madīnah* often referred to the "*akhbār*" of Indian provinces and foreign countries, entitling the section of each newspaper discussing national and international news " *'ām akhbār aur 'ām tār*" or "general *akhbār* and telegrams." This wording makes clear that *akhbār* was being referred to in the sense of private correspondence between the writer and the editor of *Madīnah*; in other words implying that Madīnah was making use of a vast network of *akhbār navīs* placed across India and the world. *Madīnah* also referred to "*payām*" or messages, noting down the source and date of each transmission to underline its authenticity as fresh correspondence.[23] Finally, many newspapers of the period employed Persian language and terminology to establish another link between their publication and the rich tradition of *akhbār navīs*.[24] *Madīnah* regularly published Persian poetry, and its editors as well as correspondents often wrote in heavily Persian-inflected Urdu.[25] *Madīnah* therefore demonstrated the force of this trend, common among Urdu newspapers of the time, to invoke the force of the *akhbār navīs* tradition as a framework for their literary contributions.

This identification with the tradition of the *akhbār navīs* could also explain *Madīnah*'s frustration at both the Muslim League and the Congress' failure to disseminate regular reports regarding their activities in its earliest years. In 1917, a particularly

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[23] "'*ām akhbār aur 'ām tār*," *Madīnah*, 22 May 1912. This is only one example, but almost every issue of *Madīnah* between 1912 and 1924 has an identically titled section in the newspaper.
[24] Fisher, "The Office of Akhbār Nawīs," 20.
[25] For only a few examples of Persian poetry in *Madīnah* see: Hasan Zahir Kirātpurī, "*akhbār madīnah bijnor*," *Madīnah*, 1 May 1912.

virulent article lambasted both groups for not submitting a credible report on their activities for almost two years.[26] This withholding of information would have seemed even more threatening considering *Madīnah*'s self-defined role as *akhbār-navīs* for the Muslim *ashrāf*.

Madīnah presented itself as the early twentieth century incarnation of the *akhbār navīs*, gathering information from "personal" sources in order to keep readers abreast of developments at the centre and abroad. However, in contrast to the *akhbār-navīs* of the Mughal and Company periods, *Madīnah* specifically targeted Muslim subscribers, and marketed itself as a Muslim source of *akhbār*. Although Islam would have heavily influenced cultural practices and record holding, *akhbār* was not something that tended to be associated with any spiritual meaning. In contrast, it was a tool for local leaders to build an arsenal of information for political purposes. However, *Madīnah*'s use of the genre signified a sea change, not only in how the *sharīf* community defined itself in relation to Islam, but also in its use of emerging technologies to increase the range of information disseminated to *ashrāf* across North India.

The Caliphate and Qasbah Anxieties

Before 1857, Mughal Emperors had invoked the authority of the Ottoman Caliphate, justifying their role in terms of guardianship of the political and social life of South Asian Muslims on behalf of the Caliph. Official documentation had legitimized Mughal rule as an extension of Caliphate power. The dissolution of the Mughal Empire in 1857, in addition to deposing Bahadur Shah as nominal head of state, also removed India's local link to the

[26] *Madīnah*, 21 June 1917.

Caliphate of Islam. For that reason after 1857 the Caliph's name was woven into the fabric of Friday sermons across the subcontinent, binding him to the fundament of Muslim tradition. The Ottoman sultan, the only remaining candidate for the position of Caliph, had served as a vestigial reassurance to Indian Sunni Muslims of their rightful inheritance as theological and state leaders. Just as the Mughal Emperors had issued currency in their names, the Ottoman sultan graced coins minted in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[27] The Ottoman sultan had taken up the mantle of symbolic power dropped by the Mughals.

The Balkan Wars were not the first conflict to inspire sympathy for the Ottoman Empire among Indian Muslims. Both the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 and the Greco-Turkish war of 1897 inspired Muslim fundraising and relief efforts in India.[28] Later the Agha Khan would cite the Greco-Turkish War as the initial awakening of an "essential unity" between Indian and Turkish Muslims.[29] When the Balkan Wars occurred, the Caliph once again emerged as a symbol of Islam, this time under threat.[30] This threat was perceived in a particular way by *ashrāf* Indians with roots in *qasbah*s.

Because of the links long-established between Muslim temporal power in India and that in the Ottoman empire, the plight of the Ottoman sultan resonated with Indian Muslims, particularly those descended from servants of the by-then defunct Mughal Empire in *qasbah*s. As documented in earlier chapters, the *ashrāf* society of *qasbah*s had developed in parallel with state power from the 13th century. The Mughal Empire had developed a

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[27] Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization* (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), 4.
[28] Ibid., 5.
[29] "Indian Moslem Ideals," *The Times of India*, 4 February 1914.
[30] Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization*, 6.

symbiotic relationship with the *qasbah* environment, offering opportunities for administrative service in *qasbah*s clustered throughout North India while *ashrāf* families gained consistent opportunities for prestigious employment. For this reason, although newspapers in *qasbah*s were not necessarily the earliest among Urdu newspapers to express sympathy for the Ottoman cause, the way in which they did so both reflected the particular concerns of the *qasbah* and the *qaum* as a whole. They also offered a distinctively Muslim perspective of first the Balkan Wars and then the Khilafat Movement generally. This perspective later went on to influence Indian Muslims more broadly. I would like to suggest that Bijnor *qasbah* used its combination of depth of heritage in the form of *ashrāf* kinship networks and the *akhbār navīs* tradition to augment the place of Islam as identity constitutive.

In the early twentieth century, several developments served to increase the feeling of anxiety among Indian Muslims independent of international developments. Language policies stirred up concerns of patronage in the form of government placements. Both religious buildings and the press began to take on significance as possessions of the Muslim *qaum* under threat. After a brief discussion of the significance of the Ottoman Caliphate in the Indian context, I will return to these internal developments in order to underline how support for the Caliph enabled expression of these anxieties.

In the meantime in Europe, tension between Italy and Turkey rose to a fever pitch. Italian nationalists, unnerved by the Austrian acquisition of Bosnia-Herzegovina on 6 October 1908, in what came to be known as the Balkan Crisis, began to look towards

Ottoman-controlled Libya as a way to help restore its influence.[31] What followed was a period of "peaceful penetration" by Italy comprising attempts to establish economic dominance in Libya via the Italian government's agent Banco di Roma.[32] Both the Ottoman Empire and Italy were nominally "Great Powers" whose claims to influence were steadily diminishing in the early twentieth century. With each determined to display dominance over the other, tensions escalated beyond the breaking point. The Italo-Turkish War, waged between September 1911 and October 1912, saw the transfer of the Ottoman provinces Tripolitania, Fezzan, and Cyrenaica to Italian possession.

As a result of tensions leading to the outbreak of the Italo-Turkish Wars, Indian Muslims became increasingly concerned with the status of the Ottoman Empire. The Italo-Turkish War was one of the immediate catalysts for the founding of several politically oriented Urdu language publications *Madīnah* and *Al Khalīl*. Maulana Siraj-ud-din Ahmed's Lahore newspaper *Zamindār* (re-est. May 1911) and Abul Kalam Azad's Calcutta newspaper *al Hilāl* (July 1912) also both built their reputations on coverage of Ottoman interests under threat.[33] The Italo-Turkish War, also known as the Tripolitan war, exposed the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, laying it bare to challenges from the Balkans.

With the weakness of the Ottoman Empire exposed, the Balkan League (composed of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia) carried out an attack before the last shots of the Italo-Turkish War had been fired. Although the Indian Muslim press had been quick to

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[31] Timothy Winston Childs, *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy and the War Over Libya, 1911-1912* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 29-30.
[32] Timothy Winston Childs, *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy and the War Over Libya, 1911-1912* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 32-33.
[33] Rauf Parekh, "Allama Iqbal, Zafar Ali Khan and Zamindar," *Dawn,* 7 July 2011, accessed 6 June 2013, http://beta.dawn.com/news/671867/allama-iqbal-zafar-ali-khan-and-zamindar.; John Willis, "Debating the Caliphate: Islam and Nation in the Work of Rashid Rida and Abul Kalam Azad," *The International History Review* 32, no. 4 (2010), 2.

pick up on the implications of the Italo-Turkish War, after the outbreak of the Balkan Wars on 8 October 1912 Muslim concerns regarding the relationship between the British, Ottomans, and the Balkan Allies increased tenfold. The First Balkan War ended in May 1913 with the Treaty of London. However, less than a month later internal rivalries of the Balkan League led to Bulgaria's invasion of its allies. Incensed at Serbia and Greece's attempts to hoard the territorial spoils of war, Bulgaria attempted to reclaim its rightful share of Macedonia. Serbia and Greece, along with Romania and the Ottoman Empire effectively countered Bulgaria's offensive through separate attacks. The Second Balkan War spelled the end of the Balkan League, which Russia had employed as a diplomatic lever against Austro-Hungary as well as for its desire for a warm water port. After cessation of hostilities in August 1913, the Treaty of Bucharest deprived Bulgaria of almost all its territorial gains from the First Balkan War. As long as Britain remained neutral in the Italo-Turkish and the Balkan Wars newspapers such as *Madīnah* freely expressed support for Turkey's Muslims and their state. When Britain's interests in the area began to take on greater complexity, attitudes toward and in the press began to change as well. During the Balkan Wars Britain supported the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, since doing so prevented Russia from gaining access to warm water ports in the Mediterranean. At the same time, pragmatically Britain accepted the advantage of Greek expansion into the Ottoman Empire as insurance against Russian dominance in the region.[34] Although Britain's attitude toward the Ottoman Empire was characterized by ambivalence prior to World War I, Britain's opposition to Italian expansionism dated from the beginning of

[34] Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 80.

Banco di Roma's policies in Libya.[35] It is perhaps for this reason that *Madīnah*'s virulent criticism of Italy, even when tinged with anti-Christian and anti-European rhetoric, passed imperial censorship without comment in 1911 and 1912.

Support for the Caliphate also provided an outlet for expressions of anxiety regarding the sustainability of Muslim dominance. This anxiety had been invoked by factors independent of threats to Ottoman dominance, which nevertheless resonated with the theme of Islam under siege. These factors included patronage, language policies, mosque protection, censorship of the Urdu language press, and criminalization of dissent.

First, the government's successful proposal to accept Hindi along with Urdu as a language of the courts not only opened the playing field to Indians uneducated in Urdu but also threatened one of India's remaining links with a glorious, Mughal past.[36] British India conferred on Hindi symbolic status equal to Urdu in 1900 with the Nagri Resolution, requiring all state employees to read and write both Devanagari and the Persian script fluently within a year of their appointment. Those who knew Hindi as their mother tongue, on the other hand, usually had some passing knowledge with Urdu as a result of the long association between state power and the Persian script. This resolution placed the old-school Muslim intelligentsia, who did not usually learn to read Hindi in the course of their education, at a distinct disadvantage. After its passage, Muslims became increasingly concerned with Urdu as a method of preserving the privileged status of the Muslim

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[35] Saho Matsumoto-Best, "British and Italian Imperial Rivalry in the Mediterranean, 1912-14: The Case of Egypt," in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 18, no. 2 (2007), 297-314.
[36] Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization*, 6.

intelligentsia, in large part based in *qasbah* contexts. Urdu Defence Associations began to crop up across UP, particularly in Allahabad and Lucknow. [37]

Despite a major boon in the form of the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 awarding separate electorates, the revocation of the partition of Bengal in 1911 may have made the 1909 reforms seem like a Pyrrhic victory. Reversing the partition of Bengal not only revoked a guaranteed source of administrative appointments but also posed a symbolic challenge to Muslim efforts to protect their special interests. Minault has also pointed out that the revocation of the partition of Bengal came about as a result of agitations. Until that point, loyalty only had been the technique of Muslims, particularly those affiliated with the Muslim League, to petition the government. With the revocation of the partition of Bengal, "[the] leadership of the League thus learned that agitation, as well as loyalty, got results."[38] Protection of sacred Muslim spaces had become an increasingly major concern by the early twentieth century, as a result of threats to the Ottoman Empire. The riot at Kanpur mosque on 3 August 1913 and the ensuing firestorm of press coverage demonstrated the manifestation of this anxiety in the South Asian context.[39] Telegrams flooded the Viceroy upon the entry of Turkey into World War I, imploring the government to "safeguard the holy places of Islam."[40]

As the Balkan Wars drew to a close, changes to legislation governing censorship and conspiracy led to greater pressure on newspapers like *Madīnah*. During approximately the

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[37] Amit Kumar Gupta, "Elitism, Factionalism and Separatism: Politics in the United Provinces, 1885–1920," *History and Sociology of South Asia* 4, no. 2 (2010), 118.
[38] Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization*, 6.
[39] Spencer Lavan, "The Kanpur Mosque Incident of 1913: The North Indian Muslim Press and its Reaction to Community Crisis," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42, no. 2 (1974), 263-264.
[40] "Indian Muslims: Telegrams to the Viceroy," *The Times of India*, 7 November 1914.

same period the British government in India moved to tighten legislation governing punishment for delinquent criminal acts, particularly conspiracy. The Criminal Law Amendment of 1913 broadened the legal definition of conspiracy to include acts that were not in themselves illegal. Prior to 1913, a conspiracy was defined as a) an agreement between two or more individuals to commit an illegal act and b) the commitment of an illegal act in the process of brokering such an agreement. The Criminal Law Amendment of 1913 defined conspiracy as an agreement between two or more people to commit an illegal act *even if the act of conspiring did not involve any illegal action or omission.*[41] This radical broadening of conspiracy legislation would have added to the threatening atmosphere among those who were lobbying for increased self-government, among Muslims and Hindus alike. In this atmosphere, any group organizing to undermine British domestic or foreign policy could be accused of conspiracy, even if their methods for doing so were legal.

Madīnah, The Muslim League, and Congress Politics

From 1912 until 1919, Maulana Majīd Hasan and *Madīnah* expressed sympathy with the "Old Party" of the All India Muslim League, according to designations laid out first by Francis Robinson in 1974.[42] Like the Old Party in both the League and Congress, Hasan, and by extension *Madīnah*, emphasized the role of government in redressing grievances and ensuring the prosperity of Muslims. Although Congress featured in the newspaper's editorials, *Madīnah*'s communal tendencies were in line more with the League's vanguard

[41] Krishna Deo Gaur, *A Textbook on the Indian Penal Code* (Delhi: University Law Publications, 2006).
[42] Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, 358-390.

in Aligarh.[43] Majīd Hasan and Bulāndshahrī's sympathies with the "Old Party" of the League were clear from their response to the Lucknow Pact in December 1916; *Madīnah* denied that the deputation from the League had been representative of Muslims and opposed any idea of a compromise between Congress and the Muslim League.[44] Lucknow was the heartland of the All India Muslim League's young leaders, represented by the secretary Wazīr Hasan from 1912-1919.

The rapid devolution of power to Indians initiated by Secretary of State Montagu in 1916 made it increasingly unlikely that promises for Muslim reservations promised by the Lucknow pact would stand. At the national level, it seemed that the "Old Party" had disappeared, along with any serious remaining hope for Muslim reservations.[45] In the *qasbah* Bijnor, *Madīnah* kept a torch burning for the Muslim community's ambitions for reservations, often presenting those political goals in opposition to Hindu machinations. Its steadily rising circulation numbers make a compelling case that the flame of "Old Party" ideals, far from dying out in the late 1910's and early 1920's, was burning strong in the *qasbah* and city alike. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, followed by the Rowlatt Act and quickly escalating danger to Turkey convinced Congress (and at the same time, *Madīnah*) that unified action with both the Muslim League and Hindus would offer tangible results for the Muslim community. Editorials published in *Madīnah* initially opposed the Lucknow Pact of 1916 (insisting that the Muslim League was not representative of Muslims). Notably, *Madīnah*'s editors expressed concern to preserve the interest of *zamindars*; disappointment at the progress of the United Provinces Tenancy Bill in February 1917

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[43] Ibid., 227.
[44] *UPNNR*, 1917.
[45] Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims,* 257.

expressed regret at the government's failure to protect the landed interests; increased discontent with the negative impact of the property tax on poor Indians was a matter of equal concern.[46] The compromise between Congress and the Muslim League boded well, and the government's interest in protecting the interests of both landed *ashrāf* and poor inhabitants of *qasbah*s was waning; *Madīnah* felt the tide turning, and quickly adjusted to the new political realities, expressing support for the compromise and offering suggestions to the two bodies. [47] *Madīnah* would remain suspicious of the Hindu element throughout the non-cooperation movement, although it provided a rationale for cooperation with Gandhi centred on the argument that *swaraj* was not a particularly Hindu concept, and could easily be translated for Muslim purposes.[48] In the 1930's, *Madīnah* would become synonymous with Congress leadership seeking a place for Muslims in independent, united India.

In its initial defence of Mohammad and Shaukat 'Ali's outspoken habits in favour of the Khilafat Movement, *Madīnah* in an editorial claimed that the 'Ali brothers spoke only "the plain and bold truth." At the same time, the editorial acknowledged the necessity of existing channels to redress the grievances. [49] After the controversy surrounding the All-India Muslim League's meeting, held simultaneously to the meeting of the S.P. Sinha's Congress meeting in December 1915, *Madīnah* expressed disappointment that Congress

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[46] *Madīnah*, 21 March 1917.
[47] This shift occurred during 1917; *Madīnah*, 22 December 1916.; UPNNR, 1 May 1917, 21 June 1917, 1 September 1917, 13 December 1917. Notably, 1917 editorials in *Madīnah* expressed concern to preserve the interests of *zamindars*; UPNNR, 17 February 1917.
[48] "*giriftār aur mahātma gāndhī kā payām* [Arrest and the Message of Mahatma Gandhi]," *Madīnah*, 13 April 1919.
[49] *UPNNR*, 1 July 1915.

had failed to exert sufficient force on the issue of separate representation.[50] On the other hand, in discussion surrounding the issue of reservations in the Municipalities Bill in 1916, *Madīnah* weighed in firmly in the Old Party camp. After Syed Riza Ali and Jawaharlal Nehru had agreed on a proposal that minorities above 40% should get no additional seats in government, that those between 25% and 40% Muslim population should have 40% of seats reserved, and provinces with under 25% minority status should hold a ratio of seats equal to their proportion of the population plus one-third, [51] *Madīnah* insisted on continued attempts at reform, suggesting that Muslims should have equal representation reservations.[52] This is understandable, considering that Bijnor was one of the two districts in UP whose minority Muslim population breached 40%. In keeping with both the Old and Young Party, *Madīnah* spoke in favour of the Jahangirabad amendment, against the Hindu opposition.[53] Hindu opposition included agitation supported by the Hindu Sabha leaders such as Bhagwan Das and Lala Subkhir Sana in Allahabad, Chintamani, and Madan Mohan Malaviya.[54] *Madīnah* interpreted this opposition as a clear indication of Hindus' lack of trustworthiness in the battle for home rule.[55] Furthermore, *Saḥīfa*, the publication also owned and managed by Majīd Hasan, demonstrated support for the Muslim League over the Congress, which according to the editorial line had shown itself too eager to ally with Hindus. The article went on to discourage the Muslim League from courting Hindu support for a long-term Home Rule campaign when they had failed to support even the

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[50] *UPNNR*, 8 January 1916.
[51] Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, 249.
[52] *UPNNR*, 1 March 1916.
[53] *UPNNR*, 8 May 1916.
[54] Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, 250.
[55] *UPNNR,* 8 May 1916.

Municipalities Act.[56] Until the beginning of the Khilafat Movement in 1918 showed the writing on the wall, *Madīnah* continued to show more support for the Muslim League over Congress, while keeping tabs on the progress of both institutions. When the Muslim League made the decision to conduct their annual meeting in English, *Madīnah* protested that the language of the meeting should be Urdu instead. Failing that, the article requested that an Urdu transcript of all exchanges should be provided for attendees and, presumably, newspaper correspondents.[57] Furthermore, editorials invoked Qur'anic justification against the possibility of merging Congress and the Muslim League. *Madīnah*'s argument rested on the assumption that the religious precepts of Hinduism and Islam were unable to be reconciled, while Christianity and Islam remained religions of the book, and therefore more compatible.[58]

The Consolidation of Muslim Ashrāf in Print

As is evident from the obvious reference to one of the holy cities of Islam in its name, *Madīnah* identified as a newspaper for Muslim *ashrāf*. Margrit Pernau has discussed the multifaceted nature of personal identity, which is formed through public interactions and is based on what individuals have in common with any number of groups. She has also acknowledged that within any particular community group, individuals claim identification simultaneously to a number of communities:

> To this heterogeneity within the community corresponds the existence of similarities between members of a community and non-

[56] *UPNNR*, 12/19 October 1916.
[57] *UPNNR*, 8 November 1916.
[58] *UPNNR*, 22 November 1916.

> members. These similarities may in turn lead to the formation of alternative communities and thus have the potential to be disruptive.[59]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a time in which those within the *ashrāf* community felt the pull of similarities to non-members as a result of economic and social changes. As a result of this threat, certain members of the *ashrāf* made the decision to emphasize one particular facet of *ashrāf* identity, affiliation both with Islam, in order to minimize disruption to that community and create a more unified sense of "identity" in the face of potential threats. *Madīnah* was one of these voices. Its approach was indelibly influenced not only by its fidelity to Islam, but also by its geographic and cultural placement. What was distinctive about *Madīnah*'s voice in comparison to Urdu newspapers of previous periods was its attempt to more closely connect Islam with both the *qasbah* context and political aspirations.

Plenty of genealogies were falsified in order to claim membership to the *ashrāf*, a reasonably porous social category.[60] Interestingly, the proprietor of *Madīnah* was listed as a Shaikh in official colonial records, yet one of his contemporary biographers in India, Parvez Adil, mentions he claimed Afghani heritage, which would have made him a Pathan. This discrepancy points to the possibility that Majīd Hasan's family by identifying as Shaikhs may have sought to claim membership among the local elite and therefore augment the influence of the newspaper's voice. Mirzā Muhammad Hasan Qatīl's 1811 history *Haft Tamāsha* is more enlightening regarding the process of qualifying as a member of the *ashrāf* in the early nineteenth century.[61] Himself a Khatri by birth, he converted to

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[59] Pernau, *Ashraf*, xvi.
[60] Pernau, *Ashraf*, 59.
[61] Muḥammad Ḥasan Qatīl, *Haft Tamāshā-Yi Mirzā Qatīl* (Lucknow: Maṭba'-i Nūl Kishur, 1875).

Islam at the age of 17 before being enlisted to write ethnographies of local customs for a visiting ruler from Karbala. His text emphasizes the mutual dependence of social and religious custom between Muslims and Hindus. In addition, qualification as *sharīf* could be obtained either through claims to noble birth or social status, expressed through influence and/or wealth. According to Qatīl, Hindus tended to emphasize birth status while Muslims tended to emphasize social status as the basis for marital unions.[62] Particularly the designation of Shaikh and Pathan could disguise a variety of origins, with genealogies often representing aspirational claims rather than fact. However, the designation of *ashrāf*, even if based on an adopted name and false genealogy, still remained a source of power that could be sapped by open references to its falseness. Qatīl was a contemporary and rival of Ghalib, who undermined his competition by constantly referring to him as "Diwali Singh, the Khattri (sic) from Faridabad."[63] The category of *ashrāf*, far from a register with legal implications, was a flexible way of claiming status and prestige across the generations.[64] *Madīnah* made a concerted effort to equate *ashrāf* identity with Islam in the early twentieth century.

This Islamizing of newspaper print culture was in keeping with the trend found in other Urdu language papers in Bijnor district, which had shifted from discussing issues of primarily agricultural and local importance to issues of "general importance," particularly the Balkan Wars.[65] Before the founding of *Saḥīfa* and *Al Khalīl*, both of which had been started in 1907 and 1909, respectively, Urdu language newspapers in Bijnor tended to

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[62] Pernau, *Ashraf*, 77-79, 83-4, 86-7, 92-3, 96.
[63] Pernau, *Ashraf*, 62.; Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Ghalib: Life and Letters* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1994), 47.
[64] Pernau, *Ashraf*, 64.
[65] *List of Newspapers and Periodicals [Corrected Up to the 1st January 1913].* (United Provinces, India: United Provinces Government, 1913b).

focus on local and agricultural matters. Two other established Urdu newspapers in the area, *Risālā Tāzah Nazair* and *Zamindār wā Kāshtkār* dealt with legal matters and agricultural questions specifically.[66] These would have been issues of importance to the *ashrāf* social status group in and surrounding Bijnor, characterized by relative affluence, land ownership, and Urdu language education. *Zamindār wā Kāshtkār* became *Al Khalīl* in 1909, with its subject matter changing significantly along with its name. The only other Urdu newspaper mentioned in the 1911 gazetteer, *Qulqul*, had died out by the time *Madīnah* started publication. Interestingly, *Madīnah* continued to set aside a particular section devoted to local and national weather. This tendency may have been a tacit acknowledgement of the association between its readership and a vested interest in agriculture. By the time the Balkan Wars conflict broke out, Urdu newspaper culture in Bijnor had already begun to target an increasingly Muslim readership. I argue that this indicated a trend of conflating *ashrāf* identity with Islam, in part as a response to political developments surrounding the non-cooperation movement.

Madīnah viewed the Ottoman Empire's military and political victories during the Balkan Wars as a victory for Islam. Reporting on an Ottoman general's hesitancy to employ firepower against airplanes, the correspondent reports that the enemy planes soon crashed of their own accord. [67]The clear implication was that God defended the righteous, peace-loving Muslims in the Ottoman Empire from the airplane attacks. However, attitudes toward European powers demonstrated a nuanced awareness of shifting alliances and various motivations, aside from religious fealty. Furthermore, internal developments within the Ottoman Empire, including a departure from Sunni ideals, merited blame in

[66] Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer*, 107.
[67] "*Jang-i Maidān* [Field of battle]," *Madīnah*, 12 May 1912.

Madīnah.

On 15 March 1913, a poem entitled "A speech to India's women" appeared which talked about the Turks being driven out of their homeland.

> Look look, what memories have come to them when they sit down
> The eyes fill with tears seeing the desolate, empty house

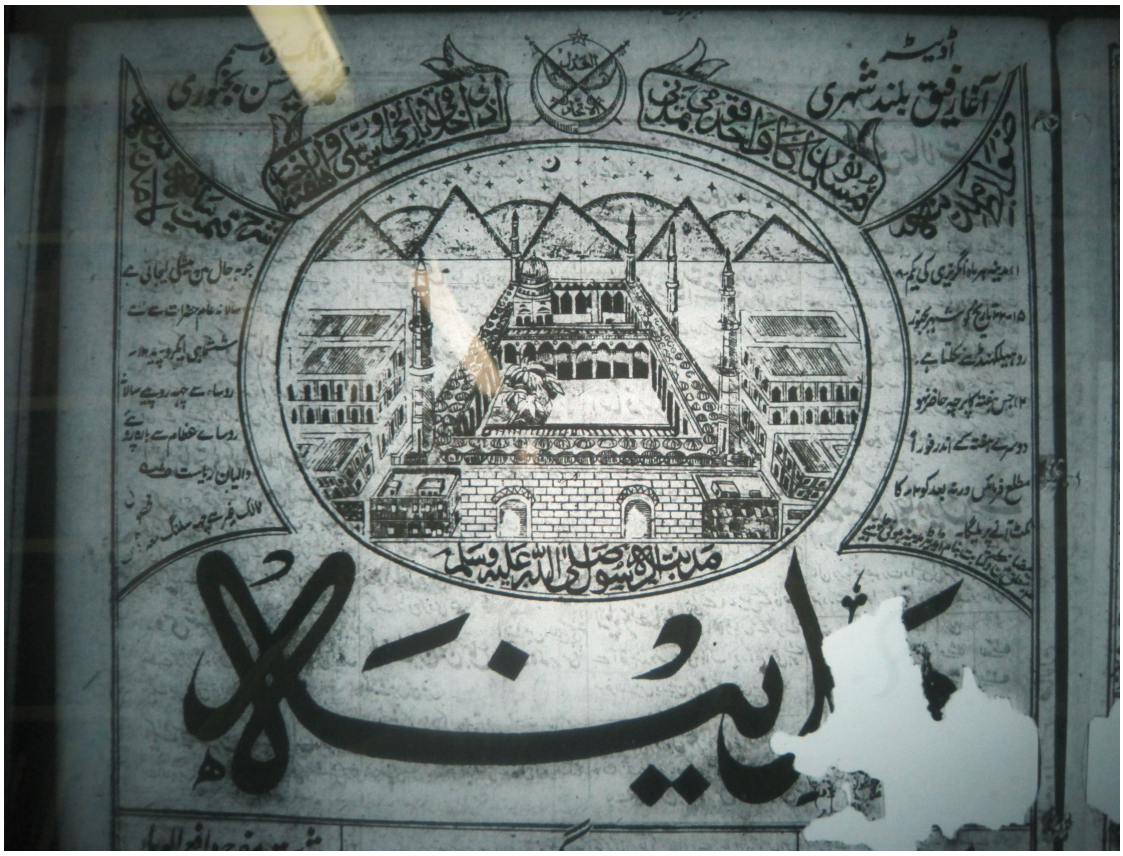
The poem, which goes on to focus on the plight of Turkish women and children, used pathos to invite the reader to sympathize with the Ottoman cause. Despite their many miseries, they had enough strength to assert the need for patience and faith in the lord. One of the lines was a direct plea to the readers to think in sympathy with the Turks:

> Who knows how those people can sleep
> When their neighbour's houses are going up in flames.

Images on the cover of *Madīnah* also underlined its commitment to Islam. Initial issues emphasized loyalty to both Britain and Muslim tradition, as represented by the pictorial representations of the city of Madīnah and *Madeenah*, the ship that had carried George V to India for his coronation darbar. By 1914, the visual emphasis on Islam had increased. Flags bearing the crescent of Islam, which bore a striking resemblance to the flag of the Ottoman Empire, marked the top of the cover in some issues, with increasingly large representations of the city of Madīnah accompanied by Arabic language embellishments. In one issue in December 1914, as the hostilities of World War I were in full swing, the skyline

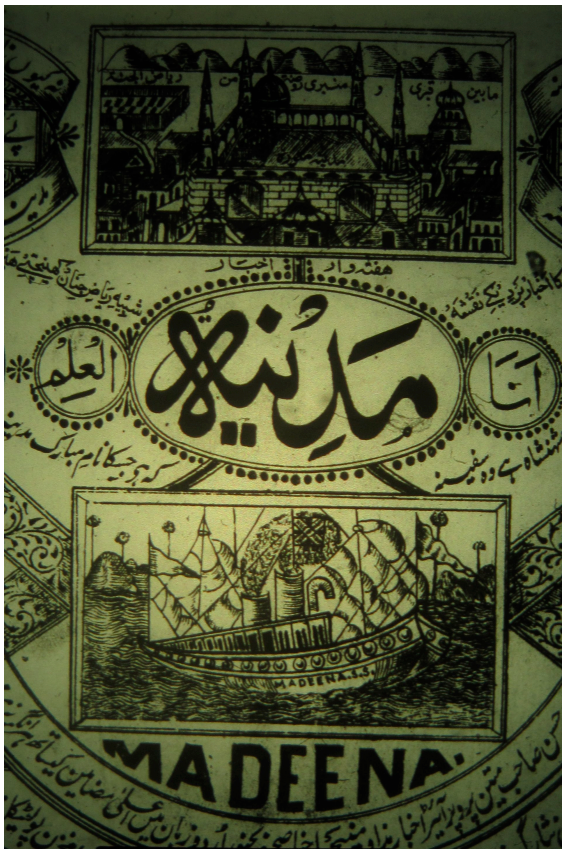
of the Arabian desert was lovingly reproduced behind a picture of the *masjid* at *Madīnah*. The sky was dotted with stars above the rolling sand dunes, and a crescent moon hung over the scene like a watchful presence. The border of the paper was punctuated by the presence of two Ottoman flags. Below the picture Arabic calligraphy spelled out the phrase of blessing to the prophet:

Cover of *Madīnah*, December 1914[68]



[68] *Madīnah*, 15/22 December 1914.

Section of *Madīnah*'s first cover, May 1912[69]



Madīnah's links with Islam were also apparent through its focus on publishing and promoting 'ulama. Making special note of prominent 'ulama who came to Bijnor *qasbah* and neighbouring districts to provide instruction, the newspaper also often published articles by 'ulama from Deoband, Nadwah, and *qasbah*s around North India on religious subjects. In one of many examples, a February 1917 issue mentioned the arrival of Maulwi Faiz Muhammad Sahib to the district Bhojīyān in order to provide religious instruction.[70] In another February 1917 issue, an article on the "Attraction of Islam" laid out the manifest

[69] *Madīnah*, 1 May 1912.
[70] "*Maulwī Faiz Muhammad Sāhib*," *Madīnah*, 17 February 1917.

attractions of religion.[71] Several other articles appeared on the subject of instruction in proper religious history, including the proper timing and comportment for prayers.[72] As the sixth chapter of this thesis will discuss, the Women's Newspaper of *Madīnah* focused on religious education for Muslim women.

Support for the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire further demonstrated *Madīnah*'s self-identification as a Muslim publication. In 1914, *Madīnah* mentioned Turkey as the seat of Islam.[73] An account of a lecture by Maulwi Sadr-ud-din in the UK discussing the conflicts between Islam and Christianity assisted in setting up a dichotomy between those two religions, a theme that also continued in the paper.[74] Of course, articles continued to appear expressing concern for the Turks and the Balkans as World War I drew to a close.[75] Even accounts of Italy's 1917 victories in the fighting between Italy and Turkey emphasized the persistence and heroism of Muslim Turks, even in defeat.[76] During the same period *Madīnah* also expressed interest in the development of Islam in other areas of the world, such as China.[77]

The question of the validity of the Caliphate emerged for the first time in *Madīnah* in February 1915. In response to the appearance of challenges to the Caliphate in English language newspapers in India, *Madīnah* attempted to stem the flood of discussion with an editorial. Rather than putting forward a defence of the Caliphate, *Madīnah* asserted that any discussion on the subject was premature and risky. In the vernacular reports, the

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[71] "*kashish-i islām*," *Madīnah*, 17 February 1917.
[72] "*salām sha'ār islām hai,*" *Madīnah*, 25 February 1917.; "*Ādāb du'ā*," *Madīnah*, 5 March 1917.
[73] *UPNNR*, 22 September 1914.
[74] *UPNRR*, 18 October 1914.
[75] "*tarkī-o balqān*," *Madīnah*, 25 February 1917.
[76] "*tarāblis mein itālvīyoN kī fatah* [In the Balkans the victory of the Italians]," *Madīnah*, 25 February 1917.
[77] "*chīn kī islāmī duniyā* [The Islamic World of China]," *Madīnah*, 28 February 1917.

Vernacular Newspaper Report summarized the editor's article as follows:

> He remarks that Muhammadans are well aware of the fact that politics and religion are two distinctly separate things, and he impresses upon his readers the futility of raising the question of the Caliphate, which, he says, is only likely to flame fanaticism.[78]

In the original version of *Madīnah*, the article was entitled "The Religious Caliphate of Islam and an Intractable Political Issue."[79] The original is much more vivid:

> In the world there are many different religions and communities. The foundation of every religion is distinct. And different behaviours predominate among different communities. And for many religions in Europe, in subordination to strong feelings, the governments have come near to trodding on religious foundations. Perhaps it is better to say they have become subordinate to the foundations of politics, which have themselves become religion. In this standing the status of religion and the religious community has become dependent on politics. Among Muslims religion is more predominant… If this [Khilafat] issue comes to light then many opinions will be established, and many extreme difficulties will emerge…
>
> The government does not know if I am Indian or European. There will be no profit in unearthing this problem. Religion is a thing separate from the individual, and politics is accepted as having the standing of overlord….
>
> The issue of the Khilafat is only important because it relates to Muslims' religious feelings, not worldly issues. It is connected to issues of both faith and worldly matters, so the issue of the Khilafat should be understood as a refuge not a source of harm… In this way our religious emotions are connected to the Imam of the Caliphate and our feelings regarding worldly politics belong to the British Government.

Madīnah, along with other vernacular newspapers of the period, sought to argue that the issue of the Khilafat Movement was a purely religious, not a political, matter. While arguing that the conflict between religious and political loyalties was imaginary, *Madīnah*

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[78] *UPNNR*, 1 February 1915.
[79] "*khilāfat-i mazhab-i islām aur sīyāsī mohār bāt*," *Madīnah*, 1 February 1915.

implicitly acknowledged that conflict between the two would spell disaster for India's Muslims, caught in the crossfire of two competing nationalisms. Although certainly not as a result of *Madīnah*'s protestations, the issue of the Caliphate fell off the public radar in India as World War I raged, until non-cooperation brought the issue back in both a religious and worldly light.

In 1918 the conversation in *Madīnah* turned more toward Turkey and the nature of Muslims' loyalty to that country. The discussions of Home Rule Leagues, Muslim League, and Congress filled the pages of *Madīnah* as much as coverage of the war. After the end of the war in November 1918, discussions of independence and the fall-out of the war in India had begun in earnest.[80] Following the end of the war, *Madīnah* experienced an adjustment period in which it searched for new material to fill pages that had been filled with battle updates and descriptions of casualties. Discussions of the state of Islam, as well as progress of both national organizations such as the Muslim League and Congress, as well as internal district meetings, increased.[81] Gandhi appeared in several of these articles.[82] In addition, discussions of the fall-out in Turkey and the Caliphate in particular took centre stage.[83] On 21 October 1919 an article entitled "Islam and Nationalism: The Muslim Community and

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[80] "[First martyr in Freedom Movement]," *Madīnah*, 5 November 1918.
[81] "*payām-i aman: sulah kānfarans kā in'iqād* [Message of Peace: The Holding of the District Conference]," *Madīnah*, 25 January 1919.; "*Āll Inḍia Muslim līg aur maslah-yi khilāf*," *Madīnah*, 9 October 1919.; "*vafād muslim līg kī tāzah 'arzdāsht be-khidmat vazīr-e 'azim*," *Madīnah*, 9 October 1919.
[82] "*giriftār aur mahātma gāndhī ka payām* [Arrest and the Message of Mahatma Gandhi]," *Madīnah*, 13 April 1919.
[83] "*maslah-yi turkī* [The Problem of Turkey: The speech of Honourable 'Iaqub Hassan]," *Madīnah*, 25 January 1919.; "[The daily life of the current Kaisar of Germany]," *Madīnah*, 5 February 1919.; "[According to Turkey, the opinion of Major Pībal]," *Madīnah*, 5 February 1919.; "*khilafah-yi aval kī tajārat-o sakhāvat* [The Business Generosity of the First Caliphate]," *Madīnah*. 13 February 1919.

Freedom and Equality" was published.[84] In it, the editors of *Madīnah* underlined a clear connection between the Muslim community in India and Muslims living in Turkey and other Muslim-dominated nations. The emphasis on the Muslim community, particularly that in Turkey, continued.[85] A poem of encomium to Turkey appears on 1 November 1919.[86]

Privileging Sunni Muslim Identity in Madīnah

While *Madīnah* presented itself as a publication for Muslims, it specifically sought to target and represent Sunni rather than Shi'a Muslims. The content of various articles makes clear this bias. Towards the end of World War I in 1917 *Madīnah*'s editors emphasized the internal erosion of proper (i.e. Sunni) Muslim belief in the Ottoman Empire, as a result of the undue influence of Iran. An article entitled "Assalam 'alaikum" discussed the source of changes to social and legal practice of Islam in Turkey, ascribing the transformation to the influence of Iran. Through the reference to Iran, a Shi'a majority country, the author implied that undue influence of Shi'a Muslims had negatively impacted the practice of Islam in Turkey so that the Caliphate then stood under threat of dissolution. Indeed, the article stated that the influence of Iran on Turkey had reached the point that it had outstripped even Iranian influence on Lucknow.[87] This was a weighty charge indeed. Evidence of Lucknow's degradation, according to the editorial, lay in their infrequent use of the typical Muslim greeting "Assalam 'alaikum." Instead, Lucknawis tended to use more secular

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[84] "*islām aur naishanalizam: islāmī qaumī-yi hurriyat aur musāvat* [Islam and Nationalism: The Freedom and Equality of the Muslim Community]," *Madīnah*, 21 October 1919.
[85] "*tarkī aur yarap,*" *Madīnah*, 21 October 1919.; "*tarkī kī ahim khabreiN*," *Madīnah*, 1 November 1919.
[86] "*saltanat tarkī rahe dāyam khudāyā bar-qarār* [May the Sultanate of Turkey Remain Eternal in God's peace]," *Madīnah*, 1 November 1919.
[87] "*assalam 'alaikum*," *Madīnah*, 21 February 1917.

greetings such as *ādāb*, a greeting associated with the particular culture of Lucknow as well as those descended from servants of the Mughals. The article denigrated *ashrāf* cultural trappings that did not invoke Islam or God, contributing to a revisionist vision of the Mughal heritage in which Islam, instead of the Mughal state, lay at the heart of the true *ashrāf* identity.

This line of argument underlined the importance of Islam in the *ashrāf* identity. In addition, however, the editorial acknowledged that the Ottoman Empire could have been facing internal as well as external challenges to the preservation of proper religion.[88] This served to complicate the assumption that all Muslim led publications sought to demonize the British as destroyers of the Caliphate. On the contrary, the printed material in *Madīnah* showed, in addition to suspicion of British motives, an emphasis on internal threats to the Caliphate, posed primarily by Shi'a practices.

Other articles in *Madīnah* testified to the absence of "true Islam" in Iran, as had reputedly existed in the country previously when Sunni practices remained widespread.[89] According to these reports, the decline of Iran had occurred as a result of departure from Sunni principles and an embrace of Shi'a Islam. The following issue described the spiritual benefits and appropriate method of offering salām in greeting.[90]

Dialogue surrounding the Khilafat Movement balanced discourse expressing sincere support for the cause of unity while betraying the existence of a fundamental division between Muslim interests and those of the rest of India. Within the Muslim community itself, there were persistent concerns regarding the advocacy of the proper version of

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[88] "*assalām 'alaikum*," *Madīnah*, 21 February 1917.
[89] Sir John Malcolm, "*sache musalmānoN kā tazkirah* [Lineage of True Muslims]," *Madīnah*, 13 March 1917.
[90] "*salām meiN kis qadar sawāb he*," *Madīnah*, 25 February 1917.

Islam, Sunni and conservative. The roots of this phraseology can be found in discussions of the Balkan Wars.

During the 1920's and 1930's Majīd Hasan attempted to put himself forward as a local Muslim leader, using the political capital gained from increased circulation of *Madīnah* during the Khilafat Movement to protest redrawing of electoral lines and proposed construction works in the city. The *qasbah* was the proving ground for local politicians with religious and political ambitions, presenting itself as a the fountainhead for authentic Mughal and Muslim identity in a time when the dominance of that cultural capital had simultaneously reached a relative peak and begun to decline in importance. *Madīnah* attempted to capitalize not only on the *qasbah*'s relevance, but also its decline, to couch its claims to act as a model to the rest of society on its distance from the large urban environment.

Muslim University Issue

It is important to keep in mind the history of Muslim reformism that formed the background for the development of ideas regarding a "Muslim community" in early twentieth century India. The Aligarh Movement, centring on the foundation of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in 1875, intended to offer India's Muslims vocational education in order to increase their chances of employment in government administration. The college focused on Urdu language, English language, and Western-influenced subjects of use to the administrative social status group.[91] The Anglo-Oriental College was answerable to an English principal and staff, a decision that *Madīnah*

[91] Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization*, 14.

newspaper criticized. For this reason, there was a movement from the late nineteenth century to transform the college into an independent university. *Madīnah* in turn supported and denigrated the proposal. It was sceptical of the effort on the grounds that the college at Aligarh was anything but an appropriate educational institution for Muslims, with its emphasis on Western knowledge and secular ideals. This opposition to the project on principle motivated *Madīnah* to support the unsuccessful proposal to loan the Muslim University fund to the Turkish government during the Balkan Wars.[92]

Muslims and Hindus

In the decade preceding the Khilafat Movement, the *qasbah*'s placement as an inviolable bastion of Mughal culture, influenced by Islamic ideals, allowed *Madīnah* the freedom to both extend support to Gandhi while emphasizing the essential identity-constitutive nature and indeed superiority of Muslim culture. It is worth considering whether this trend pervaded other *qasbah*s around North India, demonstrating the impact of small-town culture on large-scale urban projects.

At the same time, the non-cooperation movement glossed over long-standing differences in culture, purpose, and priorities among different groups of Hindus, Muslims, city-dwellers, and rural Indians, *Madīnah* retained sincere support for non-cooperation and the Khilafat movement even as it continued to express anxiety regarding the safety of Muslim "culture" in self-ruled India.[93] The *qasbah* newspapers provided a space for *ashrāf* Muslims to explore facets of their identity as post-World War I disillusionment led to the first calculated acts of non-cooperation.

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[92] *UPNNR*, 12 May 1913.
[93] Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*, 3.

Concerns aimed at Hindus appeared frequently in *Madīnah*, even as the non-cooperation movement gained momentum. Even as sincere support for the non-cooperation movement and Gandhi appeared, concurrent to this thread of political activism ran a deep-seated fear of being disadvantaged by Hindu-friendly policies.

Resentment at cow slaughter legislation's impinging on Muslim livelihood appeared. In one such article, the editorial team illustrated their opposition with colourful language: "As long as there are no cows in the stores or bazaars, who can afford to even build stone floors?"[94] The article went on to ridicule the *qasbah* legislation as including a ban against the consumption of pork, presumably as a method of pacifying Muslim critics. "Since when has pork been consumed in Bijnor?" The article asked facetiously. This article makes clear that there was no need for a ban on pork consumption, since Muslims had never allowed the consumption of pork in Bijnor in any case. In other words, *Madīnah*'s editors asserted that the ban on pork had only been included as a false compromise to enforce legislation that would disadvantage Bijnor's Muslims.

An article discussing proposed policies to augment the place of Hindi in British India both underlined the strengthening association between Islam and Urdu as well as foreshadowed the shift to Hindi post-independence. Discussion of Hindi and Urdu in the article made clear a correspondence between Hindi and Hindus, between Urdu and Muslims, when it accused one of the leaders of the movement to introduce Hindi into local government courts as a fomenter of discord between Hindus and Muslims. "If Hindi were the common language of India, then it would stand in the place of Urdu in every office and court. Year after year the attempt continues to usurp Urdu and Farsi, replacing it with

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[94] "*lokal*," *Madīnah*, 21 February 1917.

Devanagari so that in the course of doing so the use of Hindi will increase in offices."[95]

On the same page of *Madīnah*, a harsh criticism of the Muslim League and Congress's failure to publish annual reports for the last three years appeared. The newspaper suggested that the failure to complete even the simple action of publishing an annual report boded ill for a potential government. The tone of the newspaper was that of frustration at not being able to trace the "tumult and expressions of hope" which occured at the meetings outside of the confines of the leadership. The article ended with an attack on sardars, whom the author accused of laziness and miserliness, as the cause of this failure in fulfilling a simple requirement to the benefit of Indians generally. It warned that if this level of laziness and indolence continued, there would come a time when the organizations themselves would not exist. The tone of the article was frustrated, equating the failure to submit Urdu versions of the reports as a victory for Hindi and death for the community. The author made use of a fascinating analogy for their fears regarding the nationalist movement as result of the unstated occurrence of the meeting: "If the fuss of speeches achieve the level of a thick tome, leaving behind the *mulk* in the first 25 pages, then [the movement] cannot help us." Another quote, unsurprisingly, brought Hindi into the mix:

> When the cowardice of workers has risen to this level, then what will happen? Until the time it is done in accordance with procedure, our leaders' negligence bids farewell to our country and community, while Hindi declares a victory."[96]

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[95] "*hindī divanāgarī kā maslah lokal gavarnmanṭ kī kaunsil meiN* [The issue of Hindi devanagari in local government councils]," *Madīnah*, 5 March 1917.
[96] *"muslim līg aur kāngris kī riporṭ* [Report of Muslim League and Congress]," *Madīnah*, 9 March 1917.

In other words, if the movement for self-government become accepted, but must leave behind the most important foundation of its history, the Muslim community, in the process, then the movement was not acceptable.

Bijnor and the Redrawing of Electoral Lines 1913-1931

The issue of elections was a controversial issue in Bijnor district, as in other cities and municipalities around India. With the advent of recommendations that the ability to vote be limited to Muslims who could meet a certain bar of wealth in 1910, Muslim *ashrāf* in Bijnor objected to the disadvantage that such rules would pose to Muslims in the *qasbah*. After a subsequent enquiry, the Commissioner of Rohilkhand ruled, "under the higher standard of qualifications the Muhammadans would be at a disadvantage for orders." [97] The table in Appendix IV demonstrates the process of negotiation between the Muslim gentry of Bijnor to maintain the influence of their numerical majority in the *qasbah*. The discussion in the UP Municipal Records reveals that the number of final electors in Bijnor was small, but the Muslims were careful to craft their objections in order to maintain a numerical majority of Muslims among the electorate. At the time of the proposed alteration to voter eligibility, the population of Bijnor *qasbah* was 53% Muslim and 45% Hindu. Under the proposed amendment, Bijnor would have 227 Hindu electors and 405 Muslim electors. With the conditions of the Muslim negotiators met, the number of *qasbatī*s eligible to vote would amount to 167 Hindus and 418 Muslims. While in either case the regulations' impact on the number of Muslim voters was small, maintaining a Muslim majority relative to the Hindu electorate was the primary result of objections to voter registration restrictions.

[97] *Amendments of Election Rules Bijnor 1913* (Nainital: Amendments of Election Rules Bijnor 1913, 1913a), 1.

Later, controversy surrounding the redrawing of electoral districts motivated Majīd Hasan, proprietor of *Madīnah*, to file an official objection to a 1931 proposal to separate the electorate of the *qasbah* Bijnor into 9 districts: five Muslim and four non-Muslim, to reflect the distribution of the population. Although at the time of the proposal's passage, the municipality board had five Muslim and four non-Muslim members, local authorities were concerned that "[this] system has had the effect of creating inter-mohalla rivalries and animosities due obviously to there being only one constituency for the whole municipality." Colonial officials were eager to prove that the distribution of electoral seats would not change with census results; the delineation of electoral wards would stand regardless of relative growth of each religious community's population.[98] The reconstitution of electoral districts in Bijnor mirrored a similar process occurring in *qasbah*s and cities across North India in 1931. Colonial officials scrambled to put the orders into effect before the elections of the same year, [99] in order to successfully establish divisions between religious communities, reduce the risk of communal violence, and undermine collective action.

Manuscript accounts of Majīd Hasan's objections mentioned the unfair distribution to a small, non-Muslim section of the *qasbah* (Civil Lines) with its own electoral district. A section of Bijnor referred to only in the paperwork as "*qasbah*" was divided into three sections, weakening its collective power according to Majīd Hasan's objections. The section of Bijnor where a large concentration of Muslims lived, including Majīd Hasan, was referred

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[98] *Notes and Orders: Reconstruction of the Municipal Board of Bijnor* (Uttar Pradesh: Administrative Correspondence, 1931).

[99] "It is for consideration and orders if the proposal of the board may be notified first allowing two weeks only for receiving objections in view of the fact that time is short within which to bring about the change desired and also that the board had already invited objections and after fully going through them rejected finally." Notes and Orders: Reconstruction of the Municipal Board of Bijnor. Ibid.

to as the "mohalla *Qasbah*."[100] The internal papers regarding the objection were dismissive of Majīd Hasan, declaring there to be no case for any amendment to the process.

The description of the Muslim and non-Muslim mohallas offered some information about the composition of the *qasbah*. Muslims and Hindus lived in separate sections of the *qasbah*; the mohallas surrounding the Jama Masjid and the Idgah were predictably Muslim, sporting the names "Kazipara" and "Shimali." Mohallas in non-Muslim voter areas included slightly more areas ending in "ganj," a Hindi suffix indicating a market area. However, another Kazipara mohalla cropped up in the first non-Muslim voting Ward, and a mohalla named Palmerganj remained in the third Muslim voting ward. Furthermore, officials were forced to use markers as arbitrary as a flight of stairs or pillars in personal gardens to separate a Muslim mohalla from a Hindu one.[101] By using a road bordering the Jama Masjid, or Bijnor's largest mosque, as one of the dividing lines between the first and second voting wards, the plan drew an invisible division through the heart of the Muslim *qasbah* community. Majīd Hasan based his objections on this division of the Muslim majority areas of Bijnor. However, Muslim attitudes toward the reconstitution were not homogenous. Majīd Hasan was not the only *qasbatī* to weigh in on the debate regarding the election wards. Nawab Mohammad Yusuf, a minister for local self-government in Nainital, wrote a letter in support of the electoral districts.[102]

Conclusions

[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.

The conflict over municipal representation in Bijnor was the manifestion of long-standing anxieties regarding the place of Islam and social status in *qasbah* life. Majīd Hasan offered a forum for Muslims in *Madīnah*, in the process seeking to equate *ashrāf* social status and Muslim identity. *Madīnah*, known as ideologically aligned toward Deoband yet devoted to political reporting, offered a setting for both secular voices and that of ‘ulama. The *qasbah* newspaper offered new spaces to *ashrāf*, affirming the central role of Urdu, Islam, and nobility while remaining malleable in the social and political manifestations of community identity.

Chapter 5:

Expanding the *Qasbah*'s Geographic Horizons in *Madīnah*

As mentioned above, following the rebellion of 1857 *ashrāf* Muslims experienced a period of unprecedented uncertainty, motivating an exodus from cities to ancestral homes in *qasbahs*.[1] This reversion to *qasbah*-based kinship networks wrought an indelible impact on the progress of Muslim reformist movements, business enterprise, and politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[2] As a rapid reduction in patronage threatened the *ashrāf* s hold on administrative and bureaucratic positions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,[3] this re-establishment in *qasbah*s coincided with the growing availability of new technologies enabling rapid communication. As *qasbatī ashrāf* became aware of the increasingly precarious balance of power in Europe, regional papers developed a national presence.[4] In the first decades of the twentieth century newspapers became a tool with which the *ashrāf* gentry based in *qasbah*s looked outward at colonial rulers, their European neighbours, and the Ottoman Empire. In the selections of

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[1] Pernau, *Ashraf*, 272.

[2] For information on how *qasbah* networks contributed to the foundation of Deoband, see: (Metcalf 1982, 63, 76, 82, 85, 88-89, 92, 136, 275); Ata ur Rahman Qasimi, *Alwāh-us-sanadīd*, Vol. 2 (Delhi: Maulana Azad Academy, 1991), 208. Cited in Pernau, *Ashraf*, 241-260.; For studies on the Kidwai kinship network of Masauli and Baragaon see: Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism*, 55-58.; For studies of the impact on this shift to Marehra *qasbah* in the late nineteenth century and the history of the Barelwi movement, see: Usha Sanyal, *Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi: In the Path of the Prophet* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 62.

[3] For information on India generally, see David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, *The book history reader*, 2nd ed (London: Routledge, 2006), 74. For studies related to North Indian Hindi print culture, see: Ulrike Stark, "Publishers as Patrons and the Commodification of Hindu Religious Texts in Nineteenth-Century North India," *Patronage and Popularisation, pilgrimate and procession: channels of transcultural translation and transmission in early modern South Asia*, 58 (2009), 190-195.; Information related to links between print culture and Hyderabadi patronage networks emerged in, Ryan C. Perkins, "Print and Patronage in Late Colonial India," Modern South Asian History Seminar Presentation, Oxford, 3 November 2013.

[4] Narain, *Press, Politics, and Society*, 24-25.; Childs, *Italo-Turkish diplomacy*, 29-30.

newspapers available to the *ashrāf*, *Madīnah* grew into an increasingly influential voice between 1912-1924. Technological advances such as the telegraph and railway made it possible for *Madīnah* to develop a voice as a domestic forum with access to international news. The Balkan Wars, World War I, and the Khilafat Movement catalysed the expansion of *Madīnah*'s geographical horizon; at the same time *Madīnah* may have influenced South Asian perspectives of international issues. *Madīnah*'s expanded geographic horizon did not coincide with an ideological porousness. Instead the newspaper's proprietor and editor pragmatically utilized technologies and methodologies its editors identified as "European" and "scientific" while neutralizing potentially transgressive elements of international coverage. Scholarship has highlighted British disappointment at modernity's ability to infiltrate "Muslim society" in India.[5] Shireen Hunter has noted the appropriation of the "results" of modernity across the Muslim world – namely colonial technology, science, and the military/economic power associated with those – accompanied by resistance to the philosophical and moral underpinnings advocated by the colonial power.[6] *Madīnah* did advocate using technologies without absorbing the philosophies of their creators wholesale. Interestingly, the newspaper offers us a front-row seat to reactions that stand outside of the binary balancing act between appropriation and resistance. *Madīnah*'s interaction with the expanded geographic horizon demonstrated a more polyphonic quality than previous explanations have suggested. *Madīnah* pointed to the novelty of new technologies and foreign geographic spaces as a source of both wonder and credibility, with their foreign-ness remaining an essential quality of their appeal. The bricolage that

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[5] Riffat Hassan, "Islamic Modernist and Reformist Discourse in South Asia,"in *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity*, ed. Hunter, Shireen (ME Sharpe, 2009), 159-162.
[6] "Introduction," Shireen Hunter, *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity* (ME Sharpe, 2009), 10.

comprised *Madīnah* signalled belonging, otherness, and othering in a particularly *qasbah* context.

This chapter does not intend to posit any inconsistency between appropriation of "Western" technology and authentic engagement with a number of identity signifiers in the *qasbah*, including the urbanity, social status, religion, and gender. South Asia's uses for railway, telegraph, and other technologies transformed these innovations, which were in many cases introduced by colonial administrators and engineers, into specifically Indian cultural artefacts. While it was not a unique phenomenon, what is remarkable in *Madīnah* newspaper is the simultaneous "othering" of foreign-source technology, foreign geographic contexts, and institutional/cultural influences of the British colonial government while concurrently attempting to employ the othering strategy as a method of bolstering credibility in the local and national context. In this sense, the expanding geographic horizons of *Madīnah* newspaper, and by extension *ashrāf* Muslims, between 1912 and 1924, revealed not only a growing concern with political and social events beyond the South Asian context and the Muslim world, but a concomitant concern to frame those debates in terms defined by specifically *ashrāf* concerns. In other words, *ashrāf* Muslims who contributed to and read *Madīnah* were likely to be concerned about not only cultivating awareness of the international and the technologies that offered increased access. In addition, the expanded geographic horizon was accompanied by increased anxiety to construct around these new horizons a coherent framework, allowing writers to draw in new readers with exciting material and simultaneously neutralize ideological and political threats.

The Telegraph is Dead: Long Live the Telegraph[7]

On Sunday, 14 July 2013, the Indian government closed down its telegram service. Several Indians rushed to one of the 75 remaining telegram offices to send a few last memento messages.[8] Although few could disagree that the technology was redundant in an age of mobile phones, many expressed dismay at the loss of a technology that had become intricately woven into the fabric of India's collective memory. [9] It came as a shock to many that for future generations of Indians, the *tār* would have significance only as a cryptic reference in black-and-white Bollywood films or as a leaf in the crumbling records of family archives. The telegram's life cycle in India was a short one – approximately 150 years, if we measure from the time when telegraph technology use became widespread in India until its last gasp in 2013. But as the outpourings of emotion at the closure of the telegraph make clear, it profoundly influenced the lives of most Indians at one time or another. It is difficult to underestimate the extent to which telegraph technology revolutionized access to information in India, not only for individuals, but also for the dozens of vernacular language newspapers based in *qasbah*s, which depended on it for access to national and international news.

The telegraph's expansion in India occurred to facilitate military objectives. Business interests and the media added a secondary motivation to the late nineteenth

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[7] This was the content of one of the last telegraphs sent in the Indian telegram service.
[8] Geeta Pandey, "Telegrams STOP: End of service delivering joy and heartache," *BBC News Magazine*, *Delhi*, 14 July 2013, Accessed 14 November 2013. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23271384.
[9] Rajulapudi Srinivas, "The Telegram is Dead," *The Hindu*, 15 July 2013, accessed 14 November 2013, http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/telegram-is-dead/article4915659.ece.; "163-year-old telegram service to close forever at 9 PM today," *The Times of India*, The Times of India Website,14 July 2013, accessed 14 November 2013, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-07-14/india/40569085_1_telegram-service-last-telegram-humble-telegram.

century attempts at telegraph line construction. The telegraph demonstrated priceless utility to the Raj during the 1857 riots; the telegraph lines themselves had become targets of "mutineering" soldiers as a result.[10] After 1857, concerns about India's isolation from Britain grew; the first telegraph line connecting India (Bombay) to Britain was completed in January 1865. From its inception, the telegraph was a government-owned service; this was in contrast to both the telephone and the railway industries, which began as private enterprises.[11]

In 1868, a telegraph sent from Calcutta and Karachi took 17 hours and 48 minutes to transmit. By 1870, the same message transmitted in a blistering speed of 4 hours and 43 minutes.[12] Over the following decades, telegraph transmission times across India continued to drop dramatically until telegrams regularly transmitted in minutes, rather than hours. In the 1870's, with the opening of the Red Sea line, international communication via telegraph between India and Britain became dependable.[13] By the 1890's, Bijnor was linked into a complex domestic and international network of telegraph communication. Although *Madīnah* was certainly not the only newspaper, or Indian language newspaper, to employ telegraph technology, it remained distinct in the extent to which it employed the telegraph to bring the world to the *qasbah*.

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[10] Krishnalal Jethalal Shridharani, *Story of the Indian Telegraphs: A Century of Progress* (Delhi: India Posts and Telegraphs Department, 1953). 63.
[11] Ibid., 85.
[12] Appendix I. "Approximate average time occupied by Messages between the principal stations and the distances of various routes." Correspondence between D.G. Robinson, Colonel, R.E., Director General of Telegraphs in India and the Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, 24 July 1871, 35.
[13] Correspondence between D.G. Robinson, Colonel, R.E., Director General of Telegraphs in India and The Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, 24 July 1871, 1-2.

The first experimental telegraph lines had appeared in India in 1839, enjoying widespread use from the 1850's.[14] The telegraph revolutionized trade, railway schedules, industrial corporations, warfare, and, here most notably, the newspaper. Jawaharlal Nehru later proclaimed the telegraph had been the "herald of the New Age."[15] It certainly enabled the existence of the modern newspaper in India, dependent on rapid transference of information across telegraph and telephone wires."[16] Compared to the early nineteenth century, when the delivery of a small package took between 3 to 18 months at a high cost, the telegraph allowed even previously isolated *qasbah*s to share in the political developments of London, New York, or Moscow for a nominal fee. After 1872 the government ensured concessions for members of the press, to encourage their use of the telegraph. [17] The structure of telegraph tariffs encouraged communication with the Ottoman Empire; Britain was concerned to strengthen the empire's failing infrastructure as a security against growing instability in Europe. [18] Therefore, in the 1870's the tariff for telegraphs sent between India and the Ottoman Empire was cheaper than that imposed on telegraphs sent between India and Europe.[19] At the same time, the problem of unreliable telegraph service between India and the Ottoman Empire persisted until the late 1890's, and requiring much diplomatic negotiation.[20] The British Raj even offered to assist with the re-construction of the Ottoman Empire's failing telegraph infrastructure, to maintain

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[14] Shridharani, *Story of the Indian Telegraphs*, 2.
[15] Jawaharlal Nehru, "Foreword," Krishnalal Shridharani, *Story of the Indian Telegraphs: A Century of Progress* (Delhi: India Posts and Telegraphs Department, 1953).
[16] Where telegraph technology arrived in India, telephones followed in the 1880's.
[17] Shridharani, *Story of the Indian Telegraphs*, 65.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Jorma Ahvenainen, *The History of the Near Eastern Telegraphs: Before the First World War*, ed. Vammalan Kirjpaino (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2011), 176-77.
[20] Ibid., 242-243, 251

influence in the region, but was outbid by Germany. A line of 3,200 km dedicated to Indian-Ottoman telegraph traffic was opened in January 1906, allowing easier, cheaper communication between the two powers.[21]

Newspapers came to depend on the service heavily, often encouraged by government policies that limited tariffs. Although Indian language newspapers were frustrated by British policies that mandated against the re-printing of another newspaper's content less than 24 hours after its reception by telegraph,[22] tariff policies remained forgiving for newspapers. As late as 1931, when the British Raj added a telegraph tariff to raise revenue, the rabble-rousing Indian language press remained exempt. The British encouraged the press to use the telegraph, in order to keep abreast of developments by monitoring messages.[23] In 1910, the Government of India expanded a directive to the United Provinces, encouraging the surveillance and censorship of post and telegraphic messages used by newspapers.[24] All newspapers relied on the use of telegrams. English papers such as the *The Times of India* and the *Pioneer* regularly cited telegrams as informational sources in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Vernacular newspapers used both English newspapers and their own telegrams to write news items.[25] *Madīnah*'s dependence on the telegram enabled it to build a reputation as a purveyor of international and national news.

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[21] Ibid., 259
[22] Kirti Narain, *Press, Politics and Society in Uttar Pradesh, 1885-1914* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998), 24-26.
[23] Shridharani, *Story of the Indian Telegraphs*, 61.
[24] Narain, *Press, Politics and Society*, 26.
[25] Ibid., 7-15.

Bijnor *qasbah* did not gain access to telegraph technology until after 1875, when a telegraph line was constructed between Naginah and Bijnor.[26] In 1883 as a result of negotiations between the Postal and Telegraph Departments, the Telegraph Department constructed and maintained short branch lines to "outlying postal offices."[27] After the Telegraph Department set up the infrastructure, the postal workers would have then operated the machinery. Bijnor was probably one of those outliers. In any case, a Government Telegraph Office appeared in Bijnor by 1891, well in advance of *Madīnah*'s beginning in 1912 or that of its older sibling *Saḥīfa* in 1907.[28] The telegraph line was a small tributary from the main telegraph line passing between Moradabad and Saharanpur. The relatively late date of telegraph expansion to the *qasbah*, as well as the fact that Bijnor's station was a tributary rather than a through line made it clear that the Bijnor *qasbah* was a low priority. As a result, the telegraph line was a combined department between the Postal and Telegraph Departments; furthermore, the lines were constructed alongside metalled roads rather than a railway line.[29]

The editorial staff of *Madīnah* not only used the telegraph to receive national and international news from English sources, particularly related to the Ottoman Empire; it also invited correspondents to send in information independent of existing news sources. Its national and international news section was often entitled '*ām akhbār aur 'ām tār* (general

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[26] India Office of the Accountant General, Posts, and Telegraphs, *Skeleton Map of India Illustrating the Lines of Telegraph in 1870*. ed. Survey of India (Dehra Dun: Survey of India, 1870).; Survey of India, *Telegraph Map of India: Correct to Sept. 30th 1914* (Dehra Dun: Survey of India, 1914).; Survey of India, *India shewing Telegraphs* (Dehra Dun: Survey of India, 1892). Bodleian Library, Oxford.
[27] Meyer, *Imperial Gazetteer*, 440.
[28] India Office, *Skeleton Map of India Illustrating the lines of Telegraph in 1870.*; Survey of India, *Telegraph Map of India: Correct to Sept. 30th 1914.*; Survey of India, *India shewing Telegraphs*.
[29] For more on the telegraph in India, see: *Report of the Telegraph Committee* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1907), 109-110.

news and telegrams) or *barqīyāt* (literally electricity, it signalled messages that had been transferred via telegraph). At other times, the "fresh" nature of the news was emphasized in the title of this section – for example, in May 1912 when the telegram news section was entitled "*tāzah bi-tāzah-yi nū bi-nū.*"[30] *Madīnah* was listed in the 1923 Public and State Abbreviated Address book, to enable anyone with the directory, distributed widely across India, to send a telegram to the "manager of Madina newspaper, Bijnor."[31] Hasan paid 10 rupees per year to have his address included in the book, a small investment that represented the cost of one annual subscription to the newspaper at that point. The inclusion indicated *Madīnah*'s distinctive dependence on the telegraph. While a few non-Urdu language newspapers took out subscriptions, including *Āwāzī Khalq* of Benares (English-language) and *Pioneer* of Allahabad, other Urdu language papers did not tend to subscribe to the directory.[32] *Madīnah* labelled information that arrived via telegraph as breaking news. Usually the telegraph section was short, with entries only a few lines in length.

In the example below, news had come via telegram that the Ottoman forces were due to embark on an offensive manoeuvre. According to *Madīnah*'s report the Italian government, as if proving that it feared the Ottoman advance, had already begun to gather a fund for refugees from Tripoli. The urgent, brisk tone of the short entry would have enhanced the claim of the section title (to offer "the up to date and very latest" news).

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[30] "*tāzah bi-tāzah-yi nū bi-nū,* [The up-to-date of the very latest]," *Madīnah*, 22 May 1912.
[31] *Public and State Abbreviated Addresses: 1923,* ed. India Posts and Telegraphs Department *(*Calcutta: Supdt. Govt. Printing, India, 1923), 680.
[32] *Public and State Abbreviated Addresses*: 1923, 1.

Sample telegraph report in *Madīnah,* 22 May 1912[33]

> *iṯālvī lan-tarānīyāN (āj kā tār) bāvajūd yikhih kisī qism ke Iṯālvī hukm ikhrāj se mustaṣne rakhe gaye haiN. jo iṯālvī is hukm ke mutābiq sultanat-i uṣmānīyah se khārij kiye jāyeinge un ke ta'adād kam-āz-kam solah hazār hogī. un … ke līye iṭalī mein fanḍ kholā gayā hai jis ke līye sab se avval shah-i iṭalī ne sāṭh hazār rupīyah chandah dīyā hai. is fanḍ kā munaẓam goṭī vazīr-i 'āzam hogā.*
>
> Despite Italian boasts (today, by telegram), there has been some sort of order related to the exclusion of Italy has been announced. The Sultan of the Ottomans will expel those Italians referred to by this order, who number at least sixteen thousand. In order to give assistance to those, Italy has opened up a fund, for which the king of Italy has given a seventy-thousand-rupee donation. The treasurer of the fund will be the prime minister.

A copy of the Urdu original of the report above is included in Appendices. The post office, already well established by the early nineteenth century, also would have served as a link between Bijnor and the outside world, primarily as a method for the editors and proprietors to receive mail from correspondents and readers as well as the way in which the newspaper was distributed. In the early 1900's, post office transport included railways (the primarily means of transport for post), but also horse and camel-driven mail carts, runners, and steamer services operating via sea and river.[34] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Postal Department experienced a huge upswing in the number of newspapers sent using its services in the United Provinces; this corresponded to the already well-documented increase in the production of newspapers in Indian languages.[35] *Madīnah* would have depended primarily on the post office to send out issues of the paper,

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[33] "*tāzah bi-tāzah-yi nū bi-nū*, [The up-to-date of the very latest]," *Madīnah*, 22 May 1912.
[34] Appendix I. "Statement showing, according to postal circles (1) the number of post officers, letter-boxes and village postment, and (2) the distances over which mails were conveyed by Railway, mail carts, runners and steamers at the close of the year 1902-3 and of the preceding year." India Post Office, *Annual Report of the Post Office of India: 1902-1903* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1903), 24.
[35] Narain, *Press, Politics and Society*, 1-15.

using the same office to transmit and receive telegrams. The postal service, while employed for the paper's distribution, was not an object of focus in the publication.

Bijnor and the Railroad

The advent of the railroad to Bijnor district wrought an indelible impact on the development of both its agricultural and manufacturing industries.[36] Railway expansion also became a bone of contention between the Bijnor *ashrāf* and the colonial government. The selective expansion of the railroad augmented the fortunes of some cities and undermined the economic advancement of other settlements.[37] Bijnor *qasbah* remained one of the few district headquarters without direct access to a railway line until 1930. This neglect was surprising considering that other cities, less central to the administration of Bijnor district, enjoyed railway access from the 1870's onward. It is even more surprising when we consider the prominence of Bijnor *qasbatīs* calls for railway expansion. All of the district's main commercial centres (Seohara, Dhampur, Naginah and Najibabad) were located directly on the railway line. The advent of the railway consolidated the economic fortunes of what later became Bijnor's commercial powerhouses. Before the advent of the railway to the district, the sugar export trade thrived in Meerut and Muzaffarnagar; the railway had shifted the focus of the sugar trade to towns with access to rail transport.[38] Towns that experienced railway expansion in the early decades of the twentieth century

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[36] For a selection of maps representing the state of the Indian railroad throught the early twentieth century, see Sarat Chandra Ghose, *A monograph on Indian railway rates* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1918).; Sanyal, Nalinaksha, *Development of Indian Railways* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1930), 30, 380.; Jogendra Nath Sahni, *Indian Railways: One Hundred* Years, *1853-1953* (New Delhi: Ministry of Railways, 1953).

[37] Robert Gabriel Varady, "Rail and Road Transport in Nineteenth Century Awadh: Competition in a North Indian Province," (PhD, University of Arizona, 1981), 221.

[38] Meyer, *Imperial Gazetteer*, 198.

(Naginah, Dhampur, and Najibabad) enjoyed increased trade while the Bijnor *qasbah*, where *Madīnah* was based, declined in economic importance. These transformations would have only increased the feeling of insecurity among *qasbatīs* in Bijnor and emphasized the importance of positions in government service and, in the case of Majīd Hasan, exploiting the growing market for publications. For this reason, *Madīnah* and other newspapers in Bijnor assertively and unsuccessfully advocated for railway expansion for decades before receiving a rail station in 1930.[39]

Indian railway companies, dating from the mid-nineteenth century, took decades to reach self-sustainability. Initiated for military and economic reasons,[40] eventually railway construction became a symbol of scientific and cultural progress as well. By the end of 1859, encouraged by the government's offer to a guaranteed return of 5%, eight private companies dedicated to the construction of railroads had emerged.[41] Railroad construction in India struggled partly as a result of a lack of experienced railroad engineers in India, and the steep learning curve that confronted British engineers upon arrival in India. Deficits plagued Indian railroads, forcing the British government to make good on its guarantees. When this program proved to be less than profitable for the British, they attempted unsuccessfully to shift to a subsidy system.[42] The nature of investment law at the time, placing a large burden on the stockholder in the event of bankruptcy, made it difficult for railways to attract investment without guarantees, however. The Awadh and Rohilkhand

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[39] *UPNNR* 1911, 905.; *UPNNR* 1909, 859.
[40] Meyer, *Imperial Gazetteer* Vol. III, 365-369.
[41] These were the East India, the Great Indian Peninsula, the Madras, the Bombay, Baroda, and Central India, the Eastern Bengal, the Indian Branch (in 1912 this has become the Oudh and Rohilkhand), the Sind, Panjab, and Delhi (in 1912 it had become the North-Western State Railway), and the Great Southern of India (in 1912 the South Indian Railway). Meyer, *Imperial Gazetteer Vol. III*, 366.
[42] G.S. Khosla, *A History of Indian Railways* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1988), 54.

State Railway, originally named the Indian Branch, entered into the government scheme.[43] This railroad, the predecessor of the railway that would later link to Bijnor, linked with the East Indian Railway via a bridge over the Ganges, and connected with the North-Western State Railway at Sahāranpūr, north of Bijnor.

While the system of guarantees to railroad companies floundered in the toxic economic environment of the 1890's, railroad development was an answer for economic and agricultural woes in the twentieth century. In Bijnor district, government concern to expand the railway emerged as a result of the 1899 decision to increase rents for the district, which employed inefficient methods for exporting the main cash crop of the district, sugar.[44] Ten years before this rent increase, the British government had purchased the Awadh and Rohilkhand Railroad in 1889, the same year that settlement reports underlined the need for speedy expansion in order to facilitate rent gathering.[45] The government purchased most of India's railroads in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.[46] By 1905, only the Bombay, Baroda and Central India line and the Madras Railway remained private railroads.[47] Awadh and Rohilkhand Railways, which had run at a loss until 1898, began to run a small profit after its acquisition by the state.[48] By 1900, the government was finally making good on an investment that had begun with guarantees to private companies in the late nineteenth century.

The early twentieth century saw many early adopters of train travel. In 1904 the

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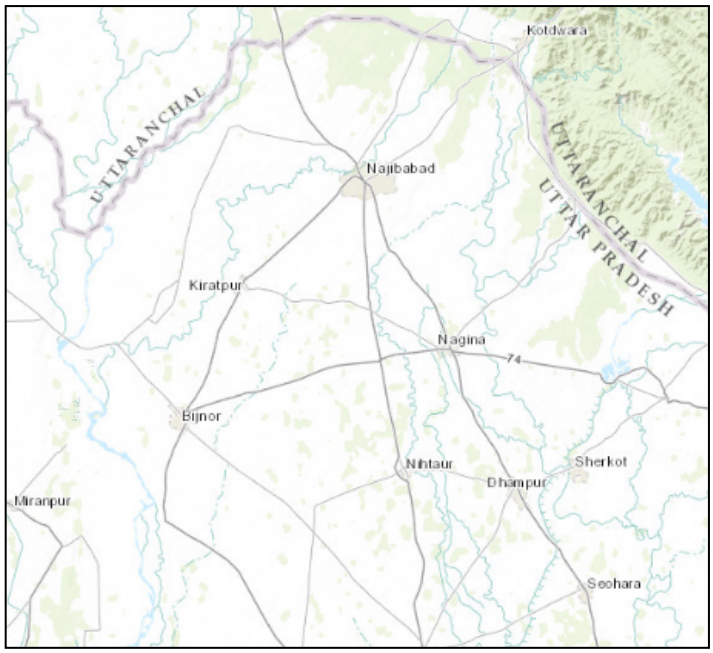
[43] Meyer, *Imperial Gazetteer Vol. III*, 399.; Khosla, *History of Indian Railways*, 55.
[44] Frederick James Pert, *Final Settlement Report of the Bijnor District (Eleventh Revision)* (Allahabad: North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1899).
[45] Meyer, *Imperial Gazetteer Vol. III*, 376.; *History of Indian Railways: Constructed and in progress corrected up to 31st March 1918* (Simla: Government Central Press, 1919), 131.
[46] N.B. Mehta, *Indian Railways: Rates and Regulations* (London: P.S. King & Son, 1927), 42.
[47] Meyer, *Imperial Gazetteer Vol. III*, 376.
[48] Ibid., 400.

Awadh and Rohilkhand Railways transported 9,750,000 people (8,750,00 of those travelled in third class). The following year, the railway transported 2,500,000 pounds of goods across Awadh and Rohilkhand regions.[49] In 1911 the Awadh and Rohilkhand Railway in Bijnor expanded through the District centre, connecting Najibabad to Kotdwara (which was in the Garhwal District). Further south, the Moradabad-Ghaziabad Railway connected Chandpur to Gajraula.[50] The *qasbah* Bijnor, unconnected to outsiders by a railway line, conducted export trade via two paved roads: one running between Bijnor and Naginah (which had a railway station) and another leading to the Ganges via Meerut and Muzaffarnagar Roads. At the time of *Madīnah*'s initial publication in 1912, the *qasbah* Bijnor was located 30.5 km or 19 miles from the nearest railroad station at Nagina via a "metalled" or paved road.[51] The newspaper would have depended on the local transport methods of the post office, which could provide access to rail routes in Nagina.

[49] Ibid., 399.
[50] Ibid., 199.
[51] Ibid., 201.

Map showing the distance between Bijnor and Nagina[52]

Scale: 1 inch = 30 km



Stuart Sweeny has observed that British India pursued railway expansion with an almost single-minded passion, "to the exclusion of irrigation, sanitation and education." [53] With this in mind, and keeping in mind Bijnor's obvious desire for the railway, it is strange that the government was so slow to accommodate the request. Bijnor certainly qualified as a central market town according to colonial standards. It is possible that because of Bijnor's lack of manufacturing trades compared to other cities and *qasbah*s in the district it did not qualify as a centre of commerce. Bijnor did not qualify as a major military priority either. Bijnor *qasbah* was not involved in the events of 1857 chronicled in Syed Ahmed Khan's book describing the event. However, Najibabad and Nagina, two of the towns mentioned in

[52] Map created using ArcGIS software, 1 August 2013.
[53] Stuart Sweeny, "Financing Indian Railways in the Period of High Imperialism, 1875-1914: War, Famine, and Gentlemanly Capitalism," (D.Phil thesis, Oxford University), 2008.

Khan's book, were a few of the first cities to gain access to the railway. Bijnor may have lost out on railway access as a result of its lack of military and commercial significance, but *Madīnah*'s lobbying efforts for the railway reveal the character of the *qasbah*'s attitude to both the railway and the outside world.

Madīnah paid meticulous attention to the expansion of the railroad in Bijnor district and surrounding districts. Noting minor expansions of the railway in the district, the paper presented the expansion of the railroad as both a marvel of modern technology and a boon for the newly connected township.[54] When Dehra Dun was connected to the Rohilkhand railway, *Madīnah*'s editorial line held that "the name Dehra Dun will become famous through association with the Rohilkhand railway."[55] Other articles summarized the annual income of the different railways across India. In 1912, *Madīnah* reported the revenue of Indian railway as 50 crore, summarizing the division of that revenue between the regional railway companies.[56] Integration of railway passengers and administrators within India and beyond also remained a consistent source of interest in both *Madīnah* and *Saḥīfa*. The state's failure to incorporate Indian administrators into railway management, delays in addressing Indians' complaints about service, and Europeans' tendency to travel separately from Indians all remained sources of frustration.[57]

Madīnah's requests for the expansion of the railway in Bijnor to include the *qasbah* Bijnor revealed a desire to increase the *qasbah*'s commercial involvement as well as to receive the elevated status conferred with the honour of a railway station. In the first issue

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[54] An article on 15 May 1912 reported on the expansion of the Rohilkhand railway by eight miles to connect Haridwar station with Dehra Dun in Rajputana. "'*am akhbār-o tār*: 11 May," *Madīnah*, 15 May 1912.
[55] "'*am akhbār-o tār*: 11 May," *Madīnah*, 15 May 1912.
[56] "[The Income of the Railway]," *Madīnah*, 1 May 1912.
[57] *UPNNR*, 12 June 1915.; *UPNNR*, 21 June 1917.; *UPNNR*, 1 July 1915.

of Madīnah, published in May 1912, an article appeared in the "General News" section making a case for the construction of a "light railway" in Bijnor district. Significantly, *Madīnah* presented itself as having status equal to that of other *qasbah*s in the district:

> *jin ba'az qasbāt-o-dīhāt meiN ṯā'ūn namūdār hūā thā vahān bi-dastūr keis hote rehete hain, gavarnminṭ se tajvīz kī ga 'ī hai kih eik halkī reilwe sab se choṭe paimāne kī har aise ẓil'a ke maqām par jis jagah uskī zarūrat mihisūs ho nikālī jā'e, ẓil'a bijnor meiN bhī gavarminṭ kī eik chuṭhī par uskī tihirīk ho rahī hai.* [58]
>
> As bubonic plague had become visible in *qasbah*s and villages, where cases are continuing to occur in that fashion… a request has been made of the government for a light railway so that in locations of every such district of [even] the smallest measure, [people] if they feel the need to, may be brought out from there. In the district Bijnor also at the acquittal of the government this movement is continuing.

In this article, Bijnor *qasbah* related itself to locations "of smallest measure," which suffered from deadly epidemics without easy access to medical care, or means of escape from the scourge. The isolation of Bijnor *qasbah*, which would become for *Madīnah* a kind of calling card in the 1930's, limited access to advanced medical care. The addition of the railroad was certainly a practical issue; just as important, however, was the prestige and economic credibility offered districts "of the smallest measure" with the construction of a train station.

Madīnah's editorial team built a case for further expansion of the railroad in the district, to Najibabad via Bijnor. Appealing to the economic interests of the government, *Madīnah* made reference to construction linking Chandpur to Najibabad, arguing that to

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[58] "*tā'ūn zilah bijnor mein la'iT railwe kī tajvīz* [The proposal for a light railway in the town and district Bijnor]," *Madīnah*, 1 May 1913.

conclude the line at Chandpur would be a waste of funds. Instead, the paper argued for an expansion to include the commercial centre Najibabad, with a stop included in Bijnor. The additional expense of adding Najibabad to the route would create more profit in the long term, the article argued, since the building of a "light railway" would make it easier to expand the route later on into a "major railway." The piece also included a discussion of the meaning of this criticism in relation to *Madīnah*'s attitude towards the government. The editors framed their request in language of loyalty to the government, nevertheless emphasizing their financial stake in the outcome of the railway due to their status as taxpayers.

By the mid 1910s, awareness of the need to connect Bijnor to the railway system had emerged in the colonial ranks, with the help of *Madīnah*.[59] However, Bijnor remained unconnected to a railway until the 1930s, until which point that *qasbah* remained distinctive as "one of the few district headquarters not connected with a railway."[60] An extension of the Awadh Rohilkhand Railway finally opened in January 1930, which ran from Chandpur via Bijnor to Moazampur Narain (a main station of the East Indian Railway).[61] Gazetteers observed an increase in trade in Bijnor, Chāndpur, and Haldaur as a result of the new railway line. Predictably, Dhāmpur, which had been connected to the railway since 1884, remained the centre of sugar trade in the district.[62]

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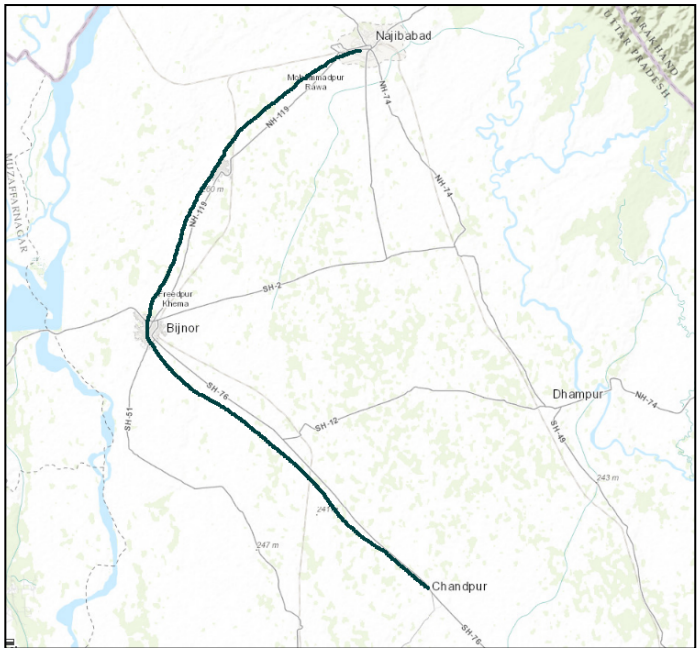
[59] Nevill, *Bijnor: Supplementary Notes and Statistics to Volume XIV of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, 13.
[60] Ibid., 8.
[61] Ibid., 6.
[62] *History of Indian Railways*. 131; Nevill, *Bijnor: Supplementary Notes and Statistics to Volume XIV of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, 4.

Proposed train route from Chandpur to Najibabad, via Bijnor[63]



Scale: 1 inch = 30 km

As a *qasbah* without direct access to train travel until 1930, Bijnor missed out on the direct experience of the railway in the latter nineteenth century. Bijnor *qasbah* was unusual in its lack of connection to the broad web of railway networks in Northern and Central India. Yet at the same time, Bijnor produced one of the most influential and profitable newspapers agitating against the government. Bijnor capitalized on its isolation by emphasizing its position as a place apart.

The Awadh and Rohilkhand Railways became a boon for trade, heavily used by Indians to travel locally.[64] Aparajita Mukhopadhyay has pointed out that authors of travelogues in both Hindi and Bengali appropriated the railway as a method of tourism and religious pilgrimage only for Hindus. Muslim Urdu-speakers, in comparison, wrote few

[63] Map created using ArcGIS, using contemporary map of Bijnor district (note that river has shifted significantly in the past century). The dark line is a rough representation of the proposed railway route from Chandpur to Najibabad.
[64] Meyer, *Imperial Gazetteer Vol. VIII*, 198-199.

travelogues on train travel.[65] Train travel presented several social challenges to traditions of gender separation, among women of both religions. In the 1870's, responding to complaints about women's proximity to men, Awadh Railways responded by creating separate railway cars for women. Upper caste Hindu women and other women of privilege eventually became concerned about the necessity to mix with women from lower social status. [66] Prior to the railroad's arrival, *Madīnah* and other Bijnor-based newspapers conceptualized the train as the promise of economic prosperity, withheld by colonial rulers. [67]

In the 1910's and 1920's, *Madīnah* approached the subject of railways as a mendicant, pleading to be included in the economic benefits of its infrastructure.[68] Railway expansion also brought with it intense concerns regarding the ability for both Hindu and Muslim women to protect themselves. Issues of economic and administrative equality tended to be more important to *Madīnah*'s readers; the slow speed of railway expansion succeeded in separating the *qasbah* into its own economic, and to some extent social, strata. *Madīnah* took hold of Bijnor's identity as a place apart. Even as it sought to mobilize support for its greater connection to the outside world, it used its unique qualities derived from its isolation to bolster its credibility.

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[65] Aparajita Mukhopdhyay, "No land for Muslims: railway travel and imagining India." presentation and personal conversation with author, SOAS, London, 28 October 2013.
[66] Varady, "Rail and Road Transport."
[67] *UPNNR* 1911, 905.; *UPNNR* 5 Nov. 1909.; "*tā'ūn-i zilah-yi bijnor mein la'iṭ railwe kī tajvīz* [the proposal for a light railway in the town of the district bijnor]," *Madīnah*, 1 May 1913.
[68] Ibid.

Extending the Qasbah Walls: Justifying Islam through the Lens of Europe

Madīnah's expression of Islamic identity dealt with internal, domestic manifestations of pan-Islam through the Muslim League and Congress movements for home rule during the 1910's and early 1920's. However, to the extent that the newspaper commented on international events, it did so to establish credibility with its readership, as well as to facilitate a mutually beneficial dialogue between *ashrāf* and colonial authorities. Analysis of both of these trends adds nuance to the picture of *ashrāf* interaction with the world beyond the *qasbah* and India, aside from the more straightforward opposition to British and "external" influence documented in scholarship.[69]

While scholarship has correctly emphasized the Muslim press' view that the Balkan Wars and its impact Ottoman Empire were evidence of Christian conspiracy,[70] the true portrait was more complex in the case of *Madīnah*. While *Madīnah*'s content certainly reflected the view that political conflict involving the Ottoman Empire was indicative of a clash of civilizations, it also used access to news from Europe and the United States to establish prestige among the *qasbah* readership while successfully re-affirming its reformist principles in opposition to the West. Initially, *Madīnah* kept Britain separate from early debates regarding the relative merits of Muslim and European cultures. This lacuna

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[69] The character of British interaction with Indian thinkers has often presented Western influence as oppositional to authentic development of community and ideas. Obvious exceptions to this trend are Lelyveld, Barbara Metcalf, Robinson, and others. Regardless, there remains a persistent thread of scholarship to define authentic cultural engagement in opposition to "external" British influence. For studies that demonstrate this type of oppositional approach, see: Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian mutiny and the British imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005); Nayonjot Lahiri, "Commemorating and Remembering 1857: The Revolt in Delhi and Its Afterlife," *World Archaeology* 35, no. 1 (2003), 35-60.; S. Heathorn, "The Absent Site of Memory: The Kanpur Memorial Well and the 1957 Centenary Commemoration of the Indian Mutiny", in *Memory, History, and colonialism: Engaging with Pierre Nora in colonial and postcolonial contexts*, ed. Indra Sengupta, London, 2009, 73-116.; Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *The Great Uprising in India, 1857-58: Untold Stories, Indian and British* (Boydell & Brewer, 2007).

[70] Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*, 10.

was indicative of the non-binary, complex perspective toward "Western" values in the paper. As obvious conflicts between British and Ottoman policy emerged, this complex cherry-picking formula evolved into a sophisticated attempt to undermine European values using its own logic, and to use the same logic to affirm *akhlaqī* values.

During the Balkan Wars *Madīnah* insisted that European and Islamic values were not in tension with one another. *Madīnah* maintained this consistency even as its verbose arguments demonstrated the existence of such a tension. The formal language of the article, employing Persianate language, invoked literary conventions used by writers when referencing their patrons under the Mughal patronage model.[71] In its assessment, *Madīnah* was careful to distinguish between Britain's policy priorities and that of other European powers. In an article discussing the progress of the war in the Dardanelles, in which *Madīnah* despaired of the possibility of a truce between Italy and the Ottomans, mention of a meeting between the English ambassador and the Ottoman foreign minister appeared.[72] While "a truce [was] impossible" between Italy and the Ottoman Empire, reports of collegial meetings between English and Ottoman officials emphasized the relative health of the relationship between those governments. Following the closure of the Dardanelles in April 1912 in order to more effectively protect Turkey from attack, although the English ship *Rani* suffered harm as a result of the closure, *Madīnah*'s report emphasized Britain's polite submission of a petition to open the Dardanelles, as well as its conviction that Turkey had the matter firmly in hand.[73] Reports of an English officer "Moṭonku" (standing for

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[71] The relationship between Persianate language and the Mughal patronage model was emphasized during the following presentation: Ryan C. Perkins, "Print and Patronage in Late Colonial India," Modern South Asian History Seminar, Oxford, 3 November 2013.
[72] "*jang-i maidān* [Field of battle]," *Madīnah*, 12 May 1912.
[73] "[The effect of the closure of the Dardanelles]," *Madīnah*, 12 May 1912.

Montagu) with an evidently wry sense of humour had confronted Italian warriors himself leaked into *Madīnah* as well:

> It is reported in the newspaper *Tansin* that an English officer whose name is Moṭonku (sic), who is in Algharab, Tripoli, after meeting with the Muslim warriors was fighting the Italians. He has been present in our city since Tuesday. Yesterday we sent a reporter to ask him about the state of the war but at the time of the arrival of the reporter the man was going to meet with the Minister of War. Therefore he was able to give answers to [only] a few short questions to the reporter. Our reporter asked the aforementioned officer the reason for his arrival, and he gave the response that he has come for a change of climate. After this he praised at length the bravery and courage of the Ottoman soldiers…"[74]

This stirring account described an English soldier coming to the Ottoman Empire on a whim (indeed, just for a change of climate) and undergoing a transformation in the face of Ottoman valour. The story underlined both the universal appeal of the Ottoman cause and also complicated Britain's place in the Christian-Muslim world dichotomy. Stories like this one were not uncommon during the period. Rather than assessing the article according to its factual provenance, we should instead consider it as an attempt to resolve internal tensions among *ashrāf* Muslims reconciling their loyalty to the crown with Ottoman aims; simultaneously the articles' discussion demonstrated to colonial spectators the consistency between loyalty to the Ottomans and British both.

As far as Britain was considered a Christian power, initially the attitude toward the government in *Madīnah* was ambiguous, perhaps because of the editors' awareness of government surveillance as well as a sincere ambivalence regarding British rule. As opposed to Azad's *al Hilal*, *Madīnah* refrained from criticizing the British government for

[74] *Madīnah*, 12 May 1912.

refusing to provide support to the Ottoman Empire in 1912 and 1913. In fact in that period Britain, although neutral in the conflict, looked unfavourably on Italian military advances in Libya.[75] In 1911 the Ottoman Empire had commissioned a dreadnought-class battleship named *Sultan Mehmed Reşad V*, which was to be constructed in Britain and completed in 1914.[76] As late as 1915 coverage in *Madīnah* tended to express opposition to Britain's refusal to assist the Ottoman Empire as a persistent misunderstanding, repeatedly emphasizing that the interests of the Ottomans and the English, properly understood, would not come into conflict.[77] *Madīnah* occasionally praised the British government for its attempts to keep war out of India, and tended to distinguish between different members of the "Christian powers" as having diverse motivations aside from wanton destruction.[78] By 1914, *Madīnah* encouraged the allied forces to correct the veracity of their accounts of victories and defeats, implying that the numbers were incorrect. This implication of support for the Ottoman Empire's alliance with the Central Powers, once again complicated the assertion that all Christian powers were viewed as a monolith in the Urdu press.

Previous scholarship on statements of fealty from Indian Muslims at the beginning of World War I emphasized the fact that the British government encouraged the expression of such statements from moderate Muslims.[79] Qureshi mentions such fatawa issued by Ahmad Raza Khan (Bareilly), Abdul Haq (Calcutta), Abdul Hamid (Farangi Mahal), Abdul

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[75] Childs, *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy*, 46.
[76] Ibid.
[77] *UPNNR*, 1915.
[78] "*raftār-i jang*," *Madīnah*, 25 February 1917.
[79] Robinson discussed the Farangi Mahalli Bahru'l-'Ulum Party's pro-government attitude following Turkey's entry into World War I, which it maintained in exchange for rewards from the government. Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, 270-272.

Majīd (Farangi Mahal), Pīr Mihr ʻAlī Shah (Golra), and Maulwi Syed Muhammad Razwī.[80] Other statements engineered by the British tended to not only express loyalty, but also encouraged British dominance in the Middle East. Khān Bahādūr Qāzī Aziz-ud-dīn, a deputy collector and therefore member of the *ashrāf*, published a pamphlet entitled "*TurkoN kī himāqat*" or "Turkey's Follies," encouraging the British to take over the Hijaz and assert direct control.[81] However, many organizations and newspapers voluntarily declared their loyalty. Telegrams affirming loyalty included the Muslim League of Lucknow, the Trustees of Aligarh University, the Muslim League of Moradabad, the Anjuman-i Islam of Julbulpor, and the *Observer* newspaper.[82] Each of the Urdu language papers in Bijnor - *Madīnah*, *Saḥīfa*, and *Al Khalīl* - along with many others voluntarily expressed their loyalty to the British Empire.[83] At the same time these publications attempted to preclude any attempt to undermine the Caliphate.

Madīnah's sister-publication, *Saḥīfa*, spoke out against Qāzī Aziz-ud-dīn's pamphlet as unfavourably influencing Muslims.[84] The article, asking for the pamphlet's proscription, expressed concern that the British had allowed Qāzī, a government servant, to write in such an explicitly political manner. The observation of Qazi's affiliation with the government hinted at *Madīnah*'s suspicions regarding the source of the article, while refraining from stating explicitly the cause of its objection. Less than a month later *Madīnah* published its article attempting to shut down any discussion of the Caliphate's validity.[85] *Madīnah* could

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[80] M. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924* (Lieden: Brill, 1999), 76.
[81] Ibid., 77.
[82] "Indian Muslims: Telegrams to the Viceroy," *The Times of India*, 7 November 1914.
[83] *UPNNR* 1915, January-June.
[84] *UPNNR* 1915, 19 January 1915.
[85] *UPNNR*, 1 February 1915.

not be described as a moderate Muslim paper according to Qureshi's definition, since *Madīnah*'s links to both Deoband and later on Jami'at-ul-'Ulama-i Hind were clear. But at the beginning of World War I it asserted nominally its loyalty to the British and the lack of any tension between its religious and political loyalties.

A Progressive Change in Tone as the Horizon Expands

The Kanpur Mosque issue saw *Madīnah* expressing outrage at the act of destruction, which had "caused their hearts to bleed with the poisoned instruments of demolition."[86] Warning the colonial rulers about the risks in ignoring the opinions of the Muslim population, Majīd Hasan predicted in *Saḥīfa* that "the unjust and high-handed action of the authorities will not fail to have an evil effect on the Muhammadans."[87] Not only that, but *Madīnah* showed disappointment at the Muslims of Kanpur for failing to rise up immediately in protest.[88] After the eventual agitation, *Madīnah* expressed its vindication as the voice of the community, blaming the government for the demolition, while admitting that the rioters may have acted hastily.[89]

Even after Turkey's entrance into World War I, *Madīnah* affirmed her unbounded loyalty to the British Empire in language that echoed Mughal-inspired panegyrics riddled with Persian phrases.[90] Even in the midst of acclamations of loyalty, *Madīnah* continuously emphasized the "otherness" of British influence. As the threat to the Ottoman Empire and

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[86] *UPNNR* 1915, 704.; *Madīnah*, 8 July 1913.
[87] *UPNNR* 1915, 705.
[88] *UPNNR* 1913, 733; *Madīnah*, 15 July 1913.
[89] *UPNNR* 1913, 822.; *Madīnah*, 8 August 1913.
[90] *UPNNR* 1914, 22 October 1914.; *UPNNR*, 22 October 1914.

Caliphate grew,[91] so did *Madīnah* newspaper's awareness of Britain's place as merely one of several European powers competing on the world stage.[92] This realization precipitated the increased concern for parity between the Ottomans and the British in political conversation.[93] A concomitant realization of the possibility for greater political agency influenced *Madīnah*'s decision to emphasize the internment of Mohammad and Shaukat 'Ali, in keeping with both young and old members of the Muslim League.[94] While politically, Britain became increasingly "othered," access to British-sourced news and identified-as-such European, scientific technologies remained one mode of bolstering *Madīnah*'s credibility as a newspaper for the *ashrāf*, while simultaneously maintaining its polyphonic purpose as a voice for Muslims, directed outwards.

World War I

With Turkey's entrance into World War I on the side of the Central Powers, *Madīnah*, like many other newspapers, demonstrated an outpouring of loyalty to the British raj. *Madīnah* expressed regret in February of 1915 that Germany had "alienated from Turkey the sympathies of her two best friends – Britain and France."[95] At the same time, when other newspapers such as *Mashriq* suggested that Turkey was forced to enter the war by Germany, *Madīnah* affirmed that Turkey must have chosen to do so of her own accord.[96] Turkey's complete surrender of her political agency to a European power would have been

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[91] *UPNNR* 1914, 11 Nov. 1914.; *UPNNR* 1914, 1 Dec. 1914. IOL&R, L/P&S/10/519, file 5061. Cited in Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics*, 75.
[92] Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, 250.
[93] *UPNNR*, 8 May 1915.
[94] *UPNNR*, 16 May 1915.
[95] *UPNNR* 1914, 298.
[96] *UPNNR* 1914, 1215, 1316-1317.

more horrifying than the prospect of her open opposition to Britain and her allies. Expressing regret at the Ottoman Empire's decision to join the war, *Madīnah* maintained that the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Britain posed no conflict to Muslims, since it "was not of a religious nature."[97] When the colonial government proscribed a seditious pamphlet signed by *'ulama* from Tunis, Sudan, Teheran, Morocco, Bukhara, Egypt, India, and Afghanistan in December 1914, *Madīnah* questioned the provenance of the signatures, suggesting that they were false. In a tactic by 1914 common in *Madīnah*, as well as other Urdu newspapers, the editors sought to undermine proposed facts by suggesting the existence of counterfeit or intrigue.[98] When access to news was relatively infrequent and the provenance of that information not easily checked, the question was a substantial one. In addition, questioning the truth of a published argument allowed a publication to save face and postpone the discussion of an issue.

English perspectives were enlisted to testify to the absence of "true" Muslim morals and culture in Iran, as had existed there previously.[99] Arguments against political policies of Britain focused on internal consistency. *Madīnah* only asked Britain to maintain its own standards of propriety in terms of its dealings with the Ottomans. Another newspaper in Bijnor, *Al Khalīl*, also chimed in with the same note; it specified that Indian Muslims' disappointment stemmed from the European powers' (specifically Britain's) failure to adhere to their declaration of neutrality.[100] According to the argument in local *qasbah* papers in Bijnor, it was Europe that had been disingenuous in its claims to neutrality. This

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[97] *UPNNR* 1914, 1214.
[98] *UPNNR* 1914, 15, 22 December 1914.
[99] Sir John Malcolm, "*sache musalmānoN kā tazkirah* [Lineage of True Muslims]," *Madīnah*, 13 March 1917.
[100] *UPNNR* 1913, 233.

argument placed the discussion firmly within the context of an internal political debate, measuring Britain's behaviour by the metric of statesmanship rather than by the irrelevant concern of religious fealty. Rhetorically, it was a neat tactic that pre-empted accusations of religious bias.

Confluence of the international and local

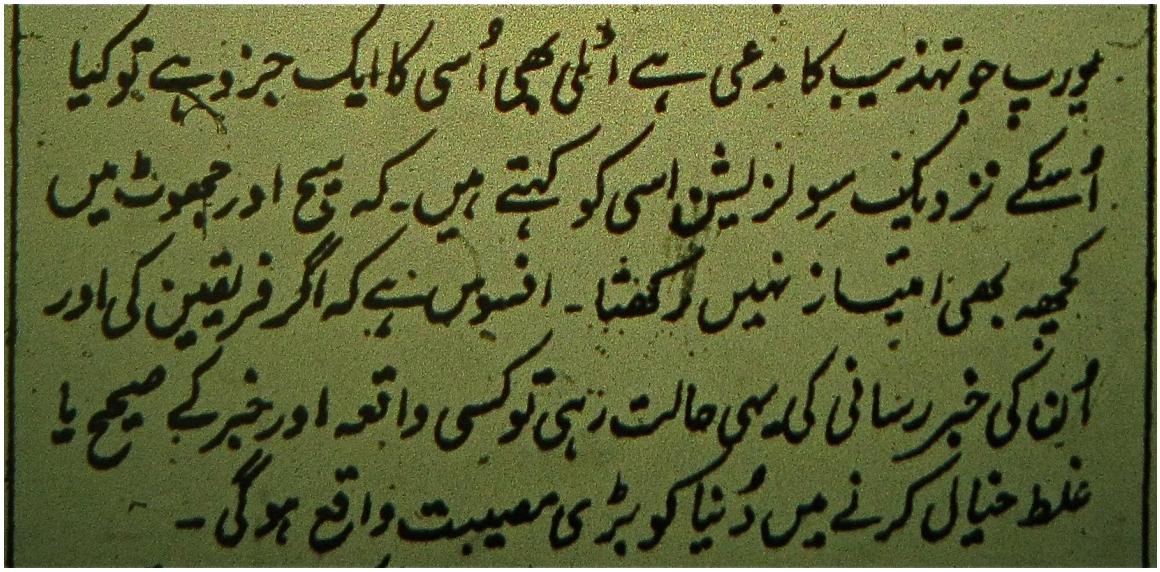
In Bijnor, the rapid expansion of geographic horizons to the West lent credibility to ideological re-affirmation of pan-Islam. This remained consistent prior to and subsequent to the start of the Khilafat Movement.

Coverage of World War I in *Madīnah* focused on timely coverage of military action. From the breakout of World War I, several pages of each issue of *Madīnah* were devoted to the nuances of military engagement and political machinations on both sides in Europe. Reports arrived to *Madīnah* from London, Rome, Washington, and Paris.[101] Detailed, lovingly illustrated Urdu maps of fields of war appeared throughout the 1910s.[102] The intricately designed maps reflected an intimate awareness of the geography of the area, and eagerness for that knowledge among the readership of the 1910s. There is no evidence to suggest that *Madīnah* was ever able to hire a foreign correspondent, although it may have made use of telegrams sent from readers abroad. Regardless, by citing the well-known names of cities located halfway around the world, and invoking their physical presence through maps, *Madīnah* marketed itself as a paper capable of bringing the wide world to

[101] "*barqiyāt-i Jang* [Electricity of War]," *Madīnah*, 13 March 1917.
[102] See Appendix.

their readers' doorstep without forcing them to resort to consulting English language papers.

Madīnah used its broadened geographic horizons, invoked through selective references to "scientific" principles, to support the application of transmitted knowledge. To this end, the newspaper treated Europe's attitude towards the Ottoman Empire as representative of an on-going comparison between the value of Western and Muslim morality. Indeed as early as May 1912, during the Balkan Wars, *Madīnah* used reports of Italy's inaccurate reporting of casualties and losses as an example of the failings of European civilization generally:


یورپ جو تہذیب کا مدعی ہے اٹلی بھی اُسی کا ایک جزو ہے تو کیا
اُسکے نزدیک سِولزیشن اسی کو کہتے ہیں۔ کہ سچ اور جھوٹ میں
کچھ بھی امتیاز نہیں رکھتا۔ افسوس ہے کہ اگر فریقین کی اور
اُن کی خبر رسانی کی یہی حالت رہی تو کسی واقعہ اور خبر کے صحیح یا
غلط خیال کرنے میں دُنیا کو بڑی مصیبت واقع ہوگی۔

> "*Yūrap jo tehezīb kā mad'a hai Iṭalī bhī usī kā eik jaz'v hai to kyā uske nazdīk sivlazaishan usī ko kehete haiN. Kih sach aur jhūṭ mein kuch bhī imitiyāz nahīN rakhtā. Afsos hai ki agar faryaqīn kī aur un kī khabar rasānī kī yahī hālat rahī to kisī vaqa'ah aur khabar ke sahīh yā ghalat khayāl karne mein dunīyā ko baṛī musībat vaqa'ah hogī.*"
>
> "Europe is a rival civilization and Italy is a part of it, so what can we say of that civilization when there is no distinction between truth and lie. It is said that if more parties had this state of their news-bearers

> then there would be much affliction in the world from wondering about the truth or lies of news and events."[103]

Madīnah remained less explicit about Britain's place in the comparison between Western Christianity and Islam; it seemed that Britain stood in the continuum between each, in a liminal space between the two categories. Muslims balanced their role between Muslims and loyal British citizens adeptly in the newspaper. When requesting the British government to censor the "Anglo-India" press regarding its coverage of Turkey, the request was expressed as a regret as well as a thinly veiled threat against "wounding the religious susceptibilities of Indian Muhammadans."[104] According to *Madīnah*, Britain stood with a foot in two camps, both as a member of the political alliance that threatened the Caliphate and the head of the British Raj, empowered to award patronage and protection in India. *Madīnah* performed a balancing act between loyalty to Britain and the importance of Muslim identity, accepting the utility of Western rationality as a method to gain credence among colonial rulers for transmitted knowledge.

Translating Internal Coherence

Madīnah demonstrated the practice of adopting a foreign internal logic in order to effectively argue a point. The below example demonstrated how the newspaper fought its battles not only through openly asserting Qur'anic injunctions, but also by justifying their stance through the internal logic of the English. In this way, it worked polyphonically to demonstrate to the Raj how complying with their demands would satisfy the demands of Western logic, while representing the Muslim *qaum*. Instead of appealing to the holy status of Islam as a community, the newspaper justified its political stance based on the rational

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[103] "*jang-i iṭalī-o tarkī* [War of Italy and Turkey]," *Madīnah,* 1 May 1912.
[104] *UPNNR* 1914, 1 Nov. 1914.

approach. This tactic demonstrated the awareness of a dual audience of *Madīnah* – both Indian Muslim and the colonial ruler. One tussle between English language and vernacular language newspapers over the March 1914 Muslim deputation to the Viceroy in Delhi highlighted how *Madīnah* employed this rhetorical approach to achieve political aims.

English language press coverage of Muslims had been preoccupied with the question of Muslim loyalty. In the *Times of India*, there appeared an article in August 1913 discussing the joyful reaction of Muslims around South Asia regarding the reclaiming of Adrianople by Turkey at the end of the Balkan Wars. The reports of the most elaborate celebration came from Burma, with more celebrations in Bombay, Madras, and Sholapur in India reported.[105] The report of the meeting of the Anjuman-i Islam in Bombay reported that the organization had sent a crore of rupees to Turkey along with two medical support missions to assist the Turks. The article hinted at the tension between Muslims' sending contributions in the spirit of religious duty, even as they celebrated a military victory of the Turks. As a result, an article in January 1914 in *The Times of India* accused some Muslims of criticizing "merely for criticism's sake."[106] In 1914 an article in the *The Times of India* reported on an article written by the Agha Khan in the *Edinburgh Review* suggesting that Muslims' religious sentiments might be "inflamed" if the future brought Turkey and Britain into conflict.[107] The article ultimately affirmed the loyalty of the Muslims through a quote from the Agha Khan:

> They are not disloyal, and labelling criticism sedition can engender nothing but disloyalty. There is plenty of room in India for loyal and free criticism…

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[105] "Mahomedan Meetings: Turkey and the Powers," *The Times of India*, 4 August, 1913.
[106] "The Year in India," *The Times of India*, 3 January 1914.
[107] "Indian Muslim Ideals," *The Times of India*, 4 February 1914.

This general assertion of loyalty was not entirely effective. Despite the Agha Khan's contributions, articles in *The Times of India* increasingly questioned the validity of Muslims' professions of loyalty as tensions in Europe once again approached the breaking point. Two months before Gavrilo Princip assassinated archduke Franz Ferdinand, a Muslim deputation composed of 'ulama, rulers of princely states, and council members gained a private audience with the Viceroy in order to attest to Muslims' loyalty. Aware of the concern caused by the outpouring of support for the Ottoman Empire following its success in reclaiming Adrianople, the deputation sought to assure the British of their fealty as the situation in Europe continued to disintegrate.

Madīnah, under the editorship of Agha Rafīq Bulāndshahrī, strongly objected to an article published in *The Times of India* calling into question the loyalty of Muslims. Although Bulāndshahrī did not specify the publication date, he certainly referred to a series of articles published at the end of March and beginning of April 1914. The initial article in *The Times of India* reported on the meeting of the deputation to the Viceroy (in Delhi on Wednesday, 25 March), which included a lengthy attestation to loyalty. Sarcastic and critical of the sincerity of the deputation, *The Times of India* columnist joked:

> Having determined on an indirect reply of this nature to their calumniators, these Mahomedan gentlemen could scarcely adopt any other line than that of impassioned protestation, though the length at which they addressed His Excellency was slightly suggestive of the refrain "we are all honourable men." We trust they will not misunderstand us when we say that they might with equal propriety have protested their sanity, for disloyalty in a Mahomedan in India at the present time would be equivalent to insanity.[108]

[108] "The Loyalty of Mahomedans," *The Times of India*, 27 March 1914.

Bulāndshahrī's editorial correctly surmised that Muslims were being accused of hiding their feelings of disloyalty in order to profess support for the Viceroy.[109] Ironically, by the time Bulāndshahrī's diatribe appeared in the hands of his readers at the beginning of April, the drama in *The Times of India* had already run its course. Three days after the acerbic column hit the stands, a meek addendum appeared in *The Times of India*, affirming the diverse composition of the deputation and, ironically, warning "the English Press against the dangers of recklessly attacking a loyal community through the influence of misinformed and biased writers." In other words, it was *The Times of India*'s turn to make the case for its own honour, possibly after receiving a slap on the wrist from censors who predicted a volatile response from the vernacular press.

Regardless, *Madīnah*'s editor Bulāndshahrī penned multiple editorials in response to the deputation in the April issues of *Madīnah*, vehemently opposing the existence of a deputation of Muslims formed to assure the government of the community's loyalty. The language of *Madīnah*'s editorials protested against the impugning of the Muslim community's virtue implicit in the act of calling the envoy.[110] In doing so, Bulāndshahrī revealed his realization that hyperbolic language of loyalty was unlikely to do the Muslim community any favours. *Madīnah* had employed elaborate language and poetry to affirm its loyalty to the British from its inception. Doing so allowed the newspaper to emphasize its connection to the Mughal *akhbār navīs* tradition, which usually included encomiums to

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[109] "*vafādārī kī namāyesh: ek na'ūz be m'anī kār-ravāyī; līd̲arān-i Islām kī be natījah harkat* [Professions of Loyalty: God forbid, a useless action; the pointless action of Islamic leaders]," *Madīnah* 8 April 1914.

[110] "*musalmān-i hind kā vafad hiz eksalansī vāyisrāye kī khidmat meiN* [The loyalty of the Muslims of India in the service of His Excellency Vice Roy]," *Madīnah*, 1 April 1914.

leadership in its marshalling of complex Persianate language. Taking the *Times* criticism to heart, Bulāndshahrī remarkably quickly transformed his political opposition to the deputation into a principled stance against protesting loyalty where it should be assumed. In doing so, he worked for the progress of the Muslim community by emphasizing common ground between Islamic rational thought and that of the West. Attesting a fact is redundant.

He quickly adapted to the new idiom posed by *The Times of India*, understanding that as opposed to courtly standards of the *qasbah*, in the evolving political climate repeated panegyrics were tantamount to disloyalty. He implicitly accepted the argument that protestations of loyalty could be misinterpreted, and blamed both the Viceroy and the Muslim deputation for opening up the *qaum* to criticism by the English language press, long viewed with suspicion in *Madīnah*. Turning *The Times of India* argument on its head, he accused the Viceroy of inconsistency in accepting a profession of loyalty after claiming to desire nothing of the sort. Here again, *Madīnah*'s editorial team quickly assessed the logical parameters of the controversy and built their argument in the context of its internal logic.

Bulāndshahrī's objections were most likely based on local factionalism. *Madīnah*'s objection to the envoy attempted to undermine the influence of the primarily liberal envoy, drawn from English-educated Muslims.[111] He objected to the liberal composition of the deputation, insisting that if such a gathering were necessary the public and the Muslim League should have organized it.[112] The frivolous deputation lowered the prestige of the League as the representative voice for Muslims by excluding them from the planning process. Bijnor's *Al Khalīl* soon afterward suggested that conservatives' strenuous

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[111] *UPNNR* 1914, 8 April 1914.
[112] *UPNNR* 1914, 20 April 1914.; "*vafādārī kī namāyesh: eik nā'ūz be m'anī kār-ravāyī; līdarān-i islām kī be natījah harkat II* [Professions of Loyalty: God forbid, a useless action; the pointless action of Islamic leaders: Installment II]," *Madīnah*, 15 April 1914.

objections to the deputation were due to the fact that liberals had organized and attended it.[113] We may assume that liberal Muslim groups would have included those influenced by and who were perhaps educated at Aligarh Muslim University. This article revealed the impact of local factionalism on attitudes towards national issues relating to Islam, hidden by an explanation invoking more objective rational reasoning palatable to the British. In this example *Madīnah* sought to preserve local political advantage through utilizing what it perceived as the internal logic of the British. Through its commentary it demonstrated insider knowledge of Delhi's politics, the content of national English papers. Here the national geographic horizon served as a straw man for local, pragmatic concerns.

English Lessons, Wristwatches and Soap: Appropriation of Power through Advertisements

Madīnah's advertisements for goods regularly emphasized their origins in America, Europe, or the West. From soap advertisements whose copy compared the beauty of Kashmir and Paris, to English language textbooks that offered business advantage, *Madīnah*'s advertisements reflect a readership interested in so-named Western goods and technologies.[114] References to Europe or America stood in for technology, in an environment where access to distant lands hinted of mystery, exoticism, and power.

Although *Madīnah* spoke against Hindi and English language education as mandatory, they regularly printed advertisements for teachers offering English education.[115] Their objection to the requirement for English education was not so much due to opposition to English in itself, since advertisements implicitly acknowledged its

[113] *UPNNR* 1914, 16 April 1914.
[114] "*Paris and Kashmīr*," *Madīnah*, 1 January 1922.
[115] e.g. Advertisement for English teacher, Urdu and English, *Madīnah*, 25 June 1919.

practical value. Instead articles on English language education in *Madīnah* sought to keep decisions regarding the use of English in the hands of the Muslim *qaum*, influenced by local considerations. The issue at hand was not the cultural context of English necessarily, but the implications of mandatory English education independent of conservative religious leadership. The mechanisms of English education remained under the control of Muslim leadership, to be used as tools to enable the success of Muslims rather than as a pathway away from the Islamic way of life. As the kindling of the Khilafat movement took light, *Madīnah* reserved the right to employ English for practical measures. On 1 December 1917, *Madīnah* reported on a meeting called by the Home Rule League in the Jama Masjid to petition for the release of Mohammad and Shaukat 'Ali. According to the report, the meeting or *jalsah* included members of Congress, the Muslim League, and the Home Rule League, and was lead by Doctor Taij Bahādūr. Reporting a speech given at the meeting, the article voiced a radical goal: "After this unexpected result, the patience of Hindustan's Muslims has already worn thin… in our opinion for us there is now only one option, to start a nation which will not follow India's historical approach."

The article concluded with a request to readers to send a telegram with a scripted message to the Secretary of State in Calcutta requesting the release of Mohamed 'Ali, Shaukat 'Ali, and Abul Kalam Azad.[116] The message, written in both English and Urdu is one of the few examples of any message printed in the English language in *Madīnah*. The calligraphy of the original author of the English message was preserved through the lithographic medium. This preservation served to give readers an exact direction as to the

[116] "[The Blessed Assembly of 8 December]," *Madīnah*, 3 December.

type of message to be offered to the Secretary of State, and preserved the same commitment to elegant reproduction of the written word in English as well as in Urdu.

The same desire for control over Western-source technologies, in tandem with a sincere fascination for their novelty, appeared in *Madīnah*'s coverage of railways, steamboats, and particularly personal technological devices. The "American" wristwatch became the most popularly advertised and illustrated item in *Madīnah* during the Khilafat Movement.[117] The so-called American timepiece, often lovingly illustrated in various designs in the newspaper, would have been a symbol of cutting-edge technology to readers. While the wristwatch had been invented in the 1880's, it was not until World War I that it became widely produced, partially as a result of soldiers' use of the technology in trench warfare.[118] Just as important as the technology and convenience that the item provided, however, would have been the individual access to the technology that the watch provided, and the freedom from colonial surveillance over its use.

Madīnah in the Limelight: Riding the Wave of Non-cooperation and the Khilafat Movement

By the 1920's and 1930's, *Madīnah* had developed an even greater degree of self-consciousness regarding its role a voice for the Muslim community, and a source of capable of objective commentary on international affairs. Despite growing criticism of the British government and European powers alike, during the Khilafat Movement dependence on foreign correspondence and appropriation of Western technologies for nationalist ends

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[117] "*amrīkan tā'impīs*," *Madīnah,* 1 June 1919, 13 June, 25 June; *Madīnah*, 13 June, 1920, 21 July 1920, 1 August 1920. Advertisements for American wristwatches continued on a weekly basis well after this point.

[118] Dominique Flechon, *The mastery of time: a history of timekeeping, from the sundial to the wristwatch: discoveries, inventions, and advances in master watchmaking* (Paris: Flammarion, 2011).

continued apace.[119] The newspaper continued to show resistance against the essentialising of Indian and European cultures as antagonistic, instead tending to emphasize points of unification while virulently attacking specific abuses.

One week after the passage of the Rowlatt Act, an editorial entitled "The difference between peace and war: Is there enmity between the east and west?" approached the political divide as indicative of differences between two conflicting cultures.[120] The article pointed out that the cessation of hostilities made the extension of the Rowlatt Act redundant and oppressive.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were welcomed in the paper, particularly the decision to institute provincial elections. Majīd Hasan published an issue of the newspaper that informed readers "the time has come for elections."[121] The word for "elections," *intikhāb*, also means "choice" in Urdu.

Ā gayā intikhāb kā moq'ah	*bord ke inqilāb kā moq'ah*
yih ilaikshan bhī masl-i roz-i jazā	*hai hisāb-o-kitāb kā moq'ah*
tīsre sāl 'aud kartā hai	*voṭroN kā sabāb kā moq'ah*
ho mubārak tamām shihir ko āj	*pursish-i shaikh-o shāb kā moq'ah*
shaikh sāhib kahīN khudā ke līye	*k,honah dunīyā khitāb kā moq'ah*
kām narmī se lījīye sarkār	*ab nahīN hai 'itāb kā moq'ah*
It came, the chance for elections,	the time for the board's revolution
Like the day of reward, this election	is the day of reckoning
Every third year it returns,	a chance for the voter's proof
Congratulations today, all cities,	for old and young's chance to ask,
Venerable sir, for God's sake,	this is a chance to lose your title somewhere

[119] e.g. "*iṭalī ke nuqsānāt jang* [Italy's destructive war],"; "*Hāland kā maṭamah-i naẓar* [Holland's goal]"; "*jarman khatrah maujūd hī* [The German threat is still present], *Madīnah*. 9 April 1919.
[120] "*salah-o jang kī āvazaish* [The difference between peace and war], *Madīnah*, 17 March 1919.
[121] "*ā gayā intikhāb kā m'oqah*," *Madīnah*, 17 March 1919.

Take the work with gentleness, boss now is not the time to reprimand.

The poem celebrated the advent of local elections as a result of both the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 and the Government of India Act of 1919, which established a diarchy at the provincial level. Directed at readers, it requested that leaders perform their work "gently," ignoring the British role entirely. Other works in the same issue approached tensions between Indian and British interests more directly, however.

As time wore on, after the passage of the Rowlatt Act, *Madīnah*, like most Urdu newspapers, grew increasingly critical of the government. The newspaper's tone toward the act became increasingly sardonic. In the month following the passage of the Rowlatt Act in March 1919 poetry and prose contributions described its many failings.

Shikvah-yi jaur-o-jafā hamne kiyā thā nah kareiN
'amr bhar hamse vafā āp kareiN yā nah kareiN

We have made complaints of oppression,
Whether you are loyal to us or not,

Hind ke vāsṯe ab pās huā ***raulaṭ bil***
nāmunāsib hai jo is rāz ko ifshā nah karein

The Rowlatt Bill has been passed for India
It would be wrong if we did not divulge this secret…[122]

The poem expressed resignation at its role as whistle-blower for the Rowlatt Act, which extended wartime legislative measures, such as strict censorship practices and

[122] "*raulaṭ bil aur ham* [The Rowlatt Bill and We]," *Madīnah*, 19 April 1919.

permitting detention without arrest, to peacetime.[123] Significantly, many prominent pieces criticizing the Rowlatt Bill were poems, all penned anonymously. Writing in poetry may have been a more effective way of writing on sensitive topics; Urdu verse lent itself to the emotive themes of suffering, oppression, and longing which the poems invoked. Any attempts to avoid the ire of the censor through the use of poetry over prose were misguided, however. The *NNR* paid close attention to poetry as the *swadeshi* and non-cooperation movements took flight.[124] Plenty of criticism appeared in prose, as well, albeit with disarmingly bland titles. One article, advertising itself as a record of governmental statistics, proceeded to lambast the Rowlatt Committee for spending 27 thousand rupees in transporting the president of the committee from London to India.[125] In a political environment in which increasing numbers of Indians were calling for greater participation in government, the casual expenditure of thousands of rupees to outsource major governmental decisions to the British would have been profoundly unpopular, of course. Just as importantly, *Madīnah* capitalized on its intricate knowledge of the state budget, building a reputation as a newspaper, which, although ideologically rooted in the *qasbah*, brought international affairs to the local tea-stand or living room.

Madīnah increasingly expressed political tensions as a clash between cultures. *Madīnah*'s expression of open support of Bal Gandaghar Tilak's civil suit against Valentine Chirol demonstrated the impact of the rapidly expanding public sphere. Tilak brought suit

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[123] For other examples, see: "*qānūn-i raulaṭ bil: eik sokhtah-dil ke qalam se* [The Rowlatt Bill laws: from the pen of a grieved heart]," *Madīnah*, 9 April 1919.
[124] *UPNNR* 1918-1919.
[125] "*b'az sarkārī shamār vā'idād* [Some governmental considerations and numbers]," *Madīnah*, 5 April 1919.

against the author for licentious statements against Indians in his book *Indian Unrest*.[126] Chirol had named Tilak "the father of Indian unrest" who manipulated the superstitions and "racial fanaticism" of India's Hindus.[127] At the same time, *Madīnah* continued to employ news reports from English newspapers and Reuter's reports from Europe to provide timely international news to its readers.[128] Its contributors, who almost always contributed articles anonymously, commented on international news with the same tone of personal investment applied to local, Muslim affairs. For instance, *Madīnah* sharply criticized the continuation of the Kaiser Wilhelm II's birthday commemoration in Holland, observing that as the monarchy had ended, so should its ceremonial trappings.[129]

Post-Khilafat: Madīnah *as a member of the Nationalist Canon and Muslim Vanguard*

From his origins on the staff of *Saḥīfa*, Majīd Hasan had successfully capitalized on an increasingly national and international focus to build his core readership in the Punjab, only in the late 1920's and 30's gaining popularity as an influential paper in its home district. By extension, its editors and managers gained influence as nationalist figures, in Bijnor *qasbah* and district. As early as 1919, *Madīnah*'s editor Manzuruddīn Shairkoṭī spoke at a harṭāl in the major gathering place, named Baṛa, in Bijnor *qasbah.* The meeting brought together *ta'alīmyāftah* or educated Hindus and Muslims, with Shairkoṭī acting as a

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[126] "*misṭar tilak kā moqadamah-yi inglistān* [Mister Tilak's case against England]," *Madīnah*, 25 February, 1 March 1919.
[127] Valentine Chrol, "Brahmanism and Disaffection in the Deccan," *Indian Unrest* (London: St. Martin's Street, 1910). Accessed on Project Gutenberg, 13 November 2013. http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/16444/pg16444.html.
[128] "*barqīyāt"* [Literally electricity, this title indicated news travelling by telegram], *Madīnah*, 28 March 1919.; "*boyir-yā aur jarman gavernmanṭ* [Boers and the German Government]"; "*Kainaḍā ne masāraf jang kā masūdah makamal kar līyā hai* [Canada has finished the draft of War expenditures]," *Madīnah*, 1 April 1919.
[129] "*kaisir-i jarmanī kā jashan sālgirah* [The German Kaiser's birthday celebration]," *Madīnah*, 1 April 1919.

representative of the Muslim political voice in the city.[130] Even after Muslim control over the Congress party disintegrated, *Madīnah* remained the voice of both moderate and radical Muslims in the 1910's and 1920's. Eventually, although it would remain an influential Congress voice, its legacy among all Muslims would remain strong enough that its failure to support the Muslim League after 1937 became a matter of public concern. *Madīnah* had built a reputation based on its placement in the *qasbah*, a place apart yet linked into the international pan-Islamic movement and national Khilafat movement. Furthermore, its particular framing of national and international events selectively employed technologies, philosophies, and languages previously associated with the West in a pragmatic manner, deriving credibility from its association and simultaneously gilding those technologies with the luminous association with the heart of South Asian Islam, the *qasbah*.

Upon the publication of *Angāre* in 1933, the Literary Progressive Movement's call to arms that lit the South Asian literary scene on fire, *Madīnah* retreated within its battlements and expressed gratitude for the boundaries of the *qasbah*. Perhaps only since the introduction of the railway in 1930 had the inhabitants of Bijnor *qasbah* begun to more fully understand the extent to which leaps in technology and shifting cultural sands influenced their way of life. *Madīnah*'s commentary on *Angāre* in the 1930s would be an affirmation of the *qasbah* and an elegy to the *qasbah*'s place as a bastion for conservative Muslim ideals. Already in the period under discussion in this thesis, *Madīnah*'s assertion of the importance of international coverage as evidence of scientific, enlightened thought, was

[130] "*harṭal*," *Madīnah*, 5 April 1919.

the correspondingly increased importance of keeping the *qasbah* cloistered ideologically.[131] In the same decade *Madīnah* shifted from its dual support for both Congress and the Muslim League to the Congress Party, which emphasized retaining a separate, safe space for India's Muslims within Hindu-dominated political structure. *Madīnah*'s links with the branch of the Ulama-i Hind opposed to Partition would remain long after independence and the miseries of Partition.

As a paper with one of the most consistently high circulations in the 1920's and 1930's, *Madīnah*'s political role was significant. It traced the development of the non-cooperation, Khilafat, and later the independence movement in minute detail. Its moderate stance in the late 1910's and early 1920's gradually evolved into a nationalist one in the 1930's. The government's increasingly oppressive attempts to clamp down on *Madīnah*'s anti-government stance reveal, if nothing else, colonial perception of its risk to government control (the newspaper was required to deposit a security twice, and forfeit it once, during the late 1920's and early 1930's). As already acknowledged, it is notoriously difficult to measure the impact of words, written or spoken, on the individual or community. Nevertheless, awareness of *Madīnah* permeates the collective memory of Lucknawis, Lahoris, and *qasbatīs* across North India and Pakistan. The delicate balancing act between expanding geographical horizons and an anxiety to police the boundaries of community "identity" persists among Muslims in South Asia today. *Madīnah* remains remarkable as much for its resourceful approach to expanding geographic and technological horizons, as for its commitment to the *qasbah* as a perpetual home.

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[131] *Madīnah*, 13 February 1933. Translation published in: Mahmud, *Angāre*, 447-448.

Chapter 6:

Men in Burqas: Gender Ventriloqiusm and Virility in *Madīnah* Newspaper

Madīnah newspaper published a women's section, entitled *Akhbār-i Nisvān*, between 1912 and 1915. The women's section included editorials, short stories, poems, advertisements, and news items ostensibly targeted at *sharīf*, or noble, women. Men usually edited and authored contributions.[1] Furthermore, some creative pieces and editorials in *Madīnah* authored by men appeared under female names, a common practice in a period when few women were literate, and even fewer bold enough to publish written work. In part to increase credibility and persuasive power, male authors in reformist-minded ladies' home journals published under female takhalluses. These articles often sought to extend "male" metrics of religious education and observance to women. The process of inhabiting the female perspective in the context of advocating reform simultaneously supplied a space for male authors and readers to explore their curiosity about the female experience. The possibility of pleasure as well as pragmatism in inhabiting the female voice and body in print contributed to already existing anxiety to protect male virility. Careful framing of gender ventriloquism in a virile, pragmatic context moderated this anxiety; mockery a la *rekhtī* and advertisements of products improving male virility further accentuated its persistence. The content of *Akhbār-i Nisvān* and the rest of *Madīnah* demonstrated how pragmatic gender ventriloquism in the service of reformism gave way to both transvestist pleasure and a corresponding anxiety to protect male virility.

Scholarship has not yet analysed the significance of men inhabiting the female

[1] Parvez Adil and Munir Hasan, personal conversation with author, Bijnor, 14-16 April 2013.

perspective in Urdu newspaper print, beyond describing it as a practical response to the dearth of female authors or as a tactic to hoodwink housewives into obeying reformist advice.[2] This chapter offers a first step toward a more nuanced perspective of how *ashrāf* Muslim authors and readers accessed the female experience and in some cases imagined inhabiting their clothes and bodies. *Madīnah* provides a useful lens for this incipient conversation, which will benefit from close readings of primary source texts. Through considering the women's section of *Madīnah* as addressing male as well as female audiences we can begin to use the Urdu press to understand the relationship between gender and reformist "identity" among the *ashrāf.*

Scholarly work on women's language in nineteenth and twentieth century India has bearing on this work; it was often through women's language that male reformist authors signalled their entry into the world of women. Minault, Naim, and Vanita have all discussed some literary and historical aspects of *begumatī zabān*, or women's speech.[3] In established artistic models, particularly in *rekhtī* poetry, the woman's voice was a source of entertainment and erotic expression. Naim's work on *rekhtī* has made clear that in that context *begumatī zabān*, or women's speech, indicated a lack of self-control and the need for reform. Nasty fights between women were a source of amusement as well.[4] Vanita's work opened up scholarship relating to *rekhtī* poetry, pointing out the ways in which the male voyeurism of the *rekhtī* overlapped with female courtesan culture. Scholarship on *rekhtī* has often over-emphasized the "maleness" of its audience; in a similar way,

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[2] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 1998.; Gail Minault, "Begumati Zaban: Women's Language and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Delhi" in *Gender, Language, and Learning: Essays in Indo-Muslim Cultural History* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009).
[3] Minault, "Begumati Zaban."
[4] C.M. Naim, "Transvestic Words: The *Rekhti* in Urdu," *Annual of Urdu Studies* (2001), 19.

scholarship on ladies' home journals has over-emphasized the "femaleness" of its audience. Ladies' home journals in the early twentieth century could serve as outlets for not only voyeurism but also transvestist fantasy for men; in this way there are parallels to the social role of *rekhtī* poetry.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the poet Jān Sāhib cultivated a persona that merged the genres of *rekhtī* and *rekhtā*, applying the female voice to issues unrelated to women. Jān Sāhib was playful as a poet, expressing ambiguity regarding his own gender and his friends' gender in verse.[5] Both *rekhtā* and *rekhtī* were at times used to express homosexual love, or at least gender-ambiguous passion. From the late nineteenth century, *rekhtī* became less erotic and lesbian and more concerned with the domestic environment, reflecting the rise of both social reformism and nationalist consciousness.[6] The reformist literature of *Madīnah* revealed that Urdu newspapers for women retained the influence of conventions in *rekhtī*. Although reformist literature offered a drastically different framework and set of goals than the *rekhtī* genre, strong hints of its conventions remain in Urdu prose and poetry. This retention hints at the persistence of gender ventriloquism, while Jān Sāhib's transformation of the *rekhtī* genre opened up a space for the possibility for further transformations to how women's voices were used.

The woman's voice not only effectively legitimized reformist demands, but also helped satisfy male curiosity about the world of women in an environment where the segregation of genders in religious and social terms was being challenged. *Madīnah*'s *Akhbār-i Nisvān*, like other ladies' home journals in Urdu, consistently emphasized the need to apply similar standards of education and religious observance to both men and women.

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[5] Ruth Vanita, *Gender, Sex and the City* (New York: Palgrove Macmillian, 2012), 213-214.
[6] Vanita, *Gender, Sex and the City*, 214.

Reformists drew back the curtain of seclusion, and women increasingly began to enter into the previously public and predominantly male world.[7] Hindi reformist journals and ladies' home journals also demonstrated the complex negotiation of women's entrance into the public space.[8] In the Urdu context at least, authors of reformist literature not only invited women to come out from the confines of *pardah* but in the process increasingly embarked on a sincere attempt to channel the previously private, female experience of what lay behind the walls of the *zenana*.

The process of transgressing boundaries between male and female religious and personal experience in *Madīnah* may have inspired an increased concern for virility and sexual potency, reflecting a growing need among men to assert their masculinity in other ways. These two impulses, both to climb over the walls of the *zenana* and to maintain the significance of gender definition, and specifically masculinity, remained two significant halves of a gendered reformist whole.

It is important not to fall into the trap of over-valuing the male perspective in a document targeted toward women. My study of *Akhbār-i Nisvān* does not assert that the perspective of male authors or readers in relation to the paper was more important than that of female authors or readers. I have no wish to return to a view of Indian sexuality as a primarily male concern, articulated only through the lens of prohibition.[9] Women's pivotal role in both the creation and interpretation of reformist women's papers in Urdu and Hindi both has been well documented over the past two decades, following Gloria Raheja and

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[7] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 105-157.; Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage: Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum of Bhopal* (London: Routledge, 2007), 1-20.
[8] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, 244-257.
[9] Sanjay Srivastava, *Passionate Modernity: Sexuality, Class and Consumption in India* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2007).

Ann Gold's fascinating 1994 study opening up various narrative threads related to women's voices.[10] While there are certainly many avenues left for exploration of women's voices in the early twentieth-century, as well as their representation in print, this chapter seeks not to describe women's assuredly crucial role in the reformist project; instead it seeks to analyse the male gaze as it focused on the female figure and attempted to represent her through print. In doing so, this work seeks to contribute much-needed nuance to the architecture of a male-led reformist movement targeting women.

While issues of transvestist representations of women in the reformist era stood apart from discussions of the lives of the women they sought to capture, the polyphonic nature of a publication targeting both genders renders detailed analysis a complex endeavour. Other works have sought to look at gender ventriloquism in regional theatre traditions and poetry, particularly the *rekhtī* form.[11] These studies have emphasized that as much as the feminist reader may like to interpret transvestist representations of female life as offering a peek into the world of secluded women, they can only offer "insight into what it means for men, who keep women secluded and socialize with other men, to invent a parody of their own idealized love literature, and to perform it for other men."[12] Vanita has pointed out that these poetic forms also can offer insight into female courtesan culture and that of aristocratic women, both social categories unusually characterized. The sphere of

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[10] Gloria Goodwin Raheja and Ann Grodzins Gold, *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* (London: U of California P, 1994).; Minault, *Secluded Scholars*.; Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*.; Lambert-Hurley, *Muslim Women*, 1-20.
[11] Kathryn Hansen, "Theatrical Transvestism in the Parsi, Gujurati and Marathi Theatres (1850-1940)" in *Sexual Sites, Seminal Attitudes: Sexualities, Masculinites and Culture in South Asia*, ed. Srivastava, Sanjay (London: Sage, 2004), 99-122.; Carla Petievich, "Rekhti: Impersonating the Feminine in Urdu Poetry" in *Sexual Sites, Seminal Attitudes: Sexualities, Masculinites and Culture in South Asia*, ed. Srivastava, Sanjay (London: Sage, 2004), 123-146.
[12] Petievich, "Rekhti," 141.

secluded and illiterate women that reformist publications sought to reform would not have overlapped with private performances of *rekhtī*, for instance. As literary features previously used to mock women and entertain men came into common parlance among reformers and their literary endeavours, however, both genders viewed performances of the female voice.

Gail Minault has teased out the role of both men and women in the founding and running of several ladies' home journals (Minault's term) in North India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[13] Her work not only highlighted the role of male and female reformists who led the charge to publish on women's issues, but also successfully documented the effect of reformism on women's domestic environment in the twentieth century. Scholarship has also highlighted the significance of women's periodicals in Hindi, specifically for a female audience.[14] However, scholarship has yet to explore the liminal space between man-as-reformer and man-as-woman in reformist works. That transformation in gendered perspective provides meaningful insights into how both gender and reformism were conceptualized in the early twentieth century. Gender ventriloquism by producers of Urdu newspapers, offering both instruction and entertainment value to male readers, revealed how a conservative discourse effectively aired out tensions within its own value system by including glimpses of the female perspective in print, balancing the transgressive power of female emotional and physical intimacy with the predictability of reformist ideals and the affirmation of masculine virility.

In the reformist context, men, by inhabiting the female voice, sought to reform and regulate the world of women while providing entertainment. At the same time, while the

[13] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*.
[14] Nijhawan, "Women and Girls."

practice of writing as a woman was not in itself a sexual act, the very act of entering into intimate areas of female experience transformed it into a potentially transgressive, erotic act. *Madīnah*'s conservative framing provided a safe space to discuss scandalous female behaviour in the *qasbah* context.

The argument for the significance of gender ventriloquism in the broader historical context depends in part on the assertion that both men and women read the paper. The structure of *Madīnah*'s *Akhbār-i Nisvān*, as a section of a paper targeted toward male readers, as well as patterns in the paper's approach to female issues, demonstrated the likelihood of a male audience. It is often assumed that ladies' home journals, although written and edited primarily by men, were directed toward an exclusively female audience. The research available on women's periodicals (primarily that of Gail Minault and Talwar) has focused on independent publications for women, rather than publications intended for a dual readership.[15] My reading of *Madīnah*, in context with other periodicals of the period, makes clear that inhabiting the female voice had significance beyond its utilitarian role in the reformist agenda. Reformist use of gender ventriloquism revealed ambivalence toward the goal of bringing women into spaces previously dominated by men as active participants. Although male ventriloquism enabled more effective regulation of the private, domestic space, it simultaneously revealed deep-seated anxiety regarding South Asian Muslims' attitudes to gendered identity. *Madīnah*'s place as a mainstream version of a "women's" publication opens up a space for this type of argument. While it is difficult to determine whether or not men read other ladies' home journals in the early twentieth

[15] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 105-145.; Vir Bharat Talwar,"Feminist Consciousness in Women's Journals in Hindi, 1910-1920," in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1991).

century (although it is clear men wrote for them) *Akhbār-i Nisvān* targeted both a male and female audience. For the first time we can look at a publication "targeted" toward women and be reasonably confident that it was not only constructed by men, but also sometimes read by men. This assertion opens up a space for deeper exploration of gender ventriloquism and Muslim identity in the first half of the twentieth century. Crucially, exploration of "women behaving badly" occurred in the framework of male virility, while advertisements for antidotes to impotency revealed growing anxiety regarding the man's place in the rapidly changing social context.

The Women's Newspaper

Appearing in May 1912, *Madīnah*'s *Akhbār-i Nisvān* (or "women's newspaper") appeared with regular frequency until the end of 1915. Editorials and creative pieces always appeared in the "Women's Newspaper" section, while political news items and advertisements related to women tended to appear in the main section of the paper. The title *Akhbār-i Nisvān* disappeared in the latter half of 1915. A frenzy of media coverage on World War I and a change in editorial leadership caused the women's section to disappear, although individual articles on women's education and health continued. Then again, for reasons unclear, the women's section re-emerged, but without its distinctive title. The final page of the paper remained reserved for women's issues, although it was not called *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. From 1916 onwards even this attention to women's concerns became scattered. It is possible that the women's section had provided a space for *Madīnah*'s editorial team to hash out reformist issues, in order to consolidate a solid base of *ashrāf* readers who shared common values. As World War I began to draw to a close and the

Khilafat Movement crested the horizon, *Madīnah* used the ideological solidarity it had crafted using its women's section to assert itself as a distinctive, authoritative Muslim voice.

Akhbār-i Nisvān usually appeared at the end of each issue just before a page or two of advertisements. The column, intended to interest and instruct honourable Muslim women,[16] included stories written by male and female authors. Although the newspaper officially targeted all Indian women, its focus on Islam's community, rituals, and history made it apparent that it served a Muslim clientele. In the first three years of *Madīnah*'s publication, when an issue shorter than the full-length version of 15 pages appeared, the women's section was almost always omitted. The Women's Newspaper was clearly less of a priority than news items and advertisements. From 1916 onwards women's issues appeared less frequently as a separate page, although individual editorials on women's education, cultural capital, and legal status still appeared. Sometimes articles on women's issues appeared in *Akhbār-i Nisvān*; other times they appeared in the main section of the paper. This seemed to correlate with the perceived "political" nature of some topics, with the more politically leaning contributions being kept out of the women's section. Articles on women's education were more likely to appear in the general section of the paper, while poetry on, for example, the emotive power of a mother's love found a place in *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. This was a general trend, however, rather than a hard and fast rule. The loose segregation of these issues revealed the "feminization" of certain topics such as dress, familial love, and the life history of pious women, while legislation related to women's issues tended to stay out of *Akhbār-i Nisvān*.

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[16] "[For honourable, educated, Indian women, a special page]," *Madīnah*, 1 March 1913.

The evolution of the newspaper's style under different editors may have changed the newspaper's appearance and content, catalysing the demise of *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. As discussed above, the blind journalist Maulwi Nūr ul-Hasan Zahīn Karatpūrī was *Madīnah*'s first editor from 1912 to 1913, and again from 1916 to 1917. Between these two periods of tenure, from 1913 until the end of 1915, M. Āgha Rafīq Bulāndshahrī was editor. By the end of Bulāndshahrī's tenure, the heading of *Akhbār-i Nisvān* had disappeared from the newspaper. The page still tended to focus on women's issues, however. When Zahīn arrived back on the scene, women's issues slipped further off the radar. *Madīnah*'s print became denser and the layout sleeker in appearance. By that point the newspaper was publishing at least 450 copies, a substantial increase from its initial release in 1912. *Madīnah* simultaneously shrank from 15 pages to 8 pages and began running twice a week. The newspaper focused more on timely communication of international news related to the Ottoman Empire and World War I. The more literary focus of *Akhbār-i Nisvān* began to fade from *Madīnah*, as well as its emphasis on the female voice. The emphasis on women's identity gave way to the significance of Muslim, *ashrāf* identity more generally. *Akhbār-i Nisvān* had served its purpose as mediator for issues relating to the identity of Muslim gentry. The end of World War I signalled a shift, from inward-facing discourse on the place of spiritual and social values to an activist stance advocating a pan-Islamic alliance. Nevertheless, the discussions about the place of women in the first several years of *Madīnah*'s publication had been formative for Majīd Hasan and his editors.

Akhbār-i Nisvān *and Ladies' Home Journals*

"The Women's Newspaper" demonstrated the influence of ladies' home journals and reformist works such as *Bihishtī Zeiwar* on its choice of subject matter. The "big three" women's periodicals, all founded and controlled by men, acted as models for other aspiring women's publications. Mumtāz 'Alī, who worked with his wife Muhammadī Begum, started *Tihzīb un-Niswān* in 1898 in Lahore. Shaikh Abdullah and his wife Wahīd JahāN Begum of Aligarh founded *Khātūn* in 1904 (it ceased publication in 1914). Rashidul Khairī's Delhi literary journal *'Ismat* began publishing in 1908, just five years before the advent of *Madīnah*.

In the decade preceding and following the founding of *Madīnah,* at least seven prominent women's periodicals began publication. In its women's section, *Madīnah* used conventions shared by other women's periodicals of the period. Like the "big three" papers, it included a "masala" of creative and instructive material. *Akhbār-i Nisvān*, like ladies' home journals of the period, published news updates, creative works, and practical instruction on domestic matters.[17] Maulana Majīd Hasan in establishing *Akhbār-i Nisvān* tapped into the popular trend of publishing articles for the benefit and improvement of women. Even the name *Akhbār-i Nisvān* mimicked the names of periodicals such as *Tahzīb un-Niswān* and *Akhbār un-Nissa*.[18] Urdu ladies' home journals sought to counter the isolation of the *zenana* by creating publications that could transcend the boundaries of

[17] I am invoking Minault's characterization of women's periodicals as a "masala" here.; Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 106.
[18] Other women's periodicals in Urdu include: *Pardah Nashīn* (founded Agra, 1906); *Sharif Bibi* (Lahore, 1910); *Al-Hijab* (Bhopal, 1910); *Zillush-Sultan* (Bhopal, 1913); *An-Nissa* (Hyderabad, 1919); *Zebunissa* (Lahore, 1934); the first two Urdu periodicals for women were *Akhbār un-Nissa* (founded Delhi, 1887) and *Mu'allim-i-Niswan* (Hyderabad, late 1880's). Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 105-150.

pardah. At the same time, male authors and readers gained access to women's domestic lives.

Publications such as Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi's *Bihishtī Zeiwar* also influenced *Madīnah*'s approach to reform. *Madīnah* under the editorial control of Zahīn Karatpūrī affirmed Thanawi's emphasis on even the most intimate areas of female life. Zahīn Karatpūrī's editorials defended *Bihishtī Zeiwar* against accusations of obscenity by the Raja of Pālanpūr.[19] By printing letters to the editor that questioned Pālanpūr 'ulama's decision to write *fatawa* against the book, proprietor Hasan and editor Zahīn demonstrated that Thanawi's reformist text was on the radar of the newspaper's readership.[20] Specifically, the newspaper through its support of *Bihishtī Zeiwar* encouraged reformist exploration of previously taboo areas of female physical experience. Syed Abul A'la Maududi's *Purdah* also reflected an emphasis on female confinement as one method of preserving a culture under threat, mirroring the place of the *qasbah* as the bastion of Muslim values.

In its subject matter *Akhbār-i Nisvān* demonstrated the influence of other male-led, reformist-minded papers in Hindi and Urdu, as well as of poetic genres like *rekhtī*. Like Hindi papers of the period, *Madīnah* published its stances on *pardah*, widow remarriage, education, and child marriage intended to promote female "uplift".[21] It also included

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[19] One article suggests that the decision is in part motivated by the claim that *Bihishtī Zeiwar* included obscene sections. If Pālanpūr excludes *Bihishtī Zeiwar* for obscenity, the author argues, then it must also apply the same standard of judgment to both the Qur'an and Hadith, which include articles on equally "obscene" topics. Another article attempts to end the controversy by reporting the decision of prominent members of Farengi Mahal that not only *Bihishtī Zeiwar* but also every work of Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi was a prime example of the principles of Islam.

[20] "*bihishtī zeiwar aur darbār-i pālanpur*," *Madīnah*, 15 October 1916.; "*bihishtī zeiwar kī mamān'at* [The censorship of *Bihishtī Zeiwar*]," *Madīnah*, 1 September 1916.; "*bihishtī zeiwar aur rīyāsat pālanpūr," Madīnah*, 1 September 1916.; "*bihishtī zeiwar aur farangi mahal ki sukhan parvī* [*Bihishtī Zeiwar* and Farangi Mehel's Staying True to their Word]," *Madīnah*, 22 October 1916.

[21] Talwar, "Feminist Consciousness," 2.; Gail Minault, "Begumati Zaban," *India International Center Quarterly* 11, No. 2 (June 1984), 155-170.

inspiring historical accounts of famous female figures, including Hazrat Fātimah, the daughter of the Prophet, the Mughal-period ruler Razīyā Sultāna, and Hazrat ʻĀisha, one of the Prophet's wives. Contributors' tendency to use *begumatī zabān* (or women's speech) to both capture and mock the female experience revealed the influence of both reformist papers and longer-standing poetic conventions, simultaneously demonstrating a tension between artistic modalities and authorial motivations. [22]

The Dual Gaze in *Madīnah*

Women certainly read or heard the content of *Madīnah*. The section of the paper often stated that its target audience was *sharīf* Hindustānī women.[23] *Madīnah* certainly did publish several articles by women. Women who wrote articles often signed them with the name of a near male relative; in contrast, articles signed with a female takhallus or simply the word *khātūn* ("woman") hinted that the author was a man. An article by one female author, "Begum --", the daughter of Maulwi ʻAissa Khān al-Quraishī deliberately kept her name hidden from her treatise on the subject of *gharūr* or pride. The Begum's language was simple and easy to understand. Her article did not employ Persian couplets or Qur'anic quotations, nor did she attempt to employ the exaggerated femininity of *begumatī zabān*. At the same time, the simplicity and almost conversational style of language as well as the inclusion of her father's name marked the author as a *sharīf* woman. The article was notable for its lack of emphasis on typically female or domestic issues. Instead, the Begum sought to provide insight to readers on the dangers of pride.

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[22] Naim, "Transvestic Words, 19.

[23] e.g. "*al-nisvān madīnah: y'anī mulkī t'alīmyāftah khāvatīn ke līye akhbār madīnah kā makhsūs safha* [For the women of Madīnah: meaning the newspaper Madīnah's special page for the educated women of the country]," *Madīnah*, 8 February 1913.

> Saying that no one is worth more than another, since all are made of the same meat and bones, is like saying that two trees are worth the same, even if one tree is sitting in a garden that is surrounded by a beautiful wall and the other is sitting in an awful place where it never receives water. Both flower at the same time, both bring forth the same fruit… It is possible that the tree that is in the garden might bear more splendid fruit, but it is not possible that they do not share the same qualities. A man of higher stature can cause difficulty to an emperor in the same way that someone of lower stature can cause difficulties. But the higher stature man will endure difficulties with some complaint, and the lower stature man will endure his oppressions without even crying out.

The Begum's article was included in *Madīnah* because it was written as a woman, rather than because of its thematic content. The article's repeated references to a sultan and head of government, and their ownership of wealth in contrast to their subjects, suggests discontent with the British as much as it was an attempt to instill humility among the *sharīf*. It did not seem to occur to the Begum to speak of women in terms of the same inequality she observed between the rich and poor, although her concern for the gap in opportunity between the privileged and the disadvantaged could easily have been applied to women's relative deprivation in education.

Women contributed to *Akhbār-i Nisvān*, although tellingly female authors chose to write on a wide range of issues, not all of them relating to women's education and reform. In contrast, when a man wrote as a woman in *Madīnah* he often focused exclusively on reformist issues. Pictured below, an article signed "*khātūn*" included the name "woman" in quotation marks, making clear that the author was male writing in a female voice. In the crescent shape a modified version of the women's newspaper title appeared: "al-Nisvān *Madīnah*" or "for the women of *Madīnah*." Below the crescent, a subtitle read "*Akhbār Madīnah kā eik makhsūs saḥīfa*," or "a special page of *Madīnah akhbār*." Finally, the title of

the article appeared: "*Eik 'khātūn kī khāyālāt joshailī naẓm ke libās meiN*" or "The perspectives (khāyālāt) of a 'woman' in the clothing of a *joshailī* naẓm."[24] A *joshailī* naẓm, translating as "fiery poem," may have been framed using traditional conventions of song or poetry dominantly used by women. In this example, the article was consciously playing on the concept of "clothing" the man in a female identity through the use of the word *libās*.[25]

Title page for the women's paper, including reference to a poem by a "woman"[26]



The poem spoke in the voice of the illiterate, ignorant woman, unable to speak for herself without the power of education:

ta'alīm kī bijlī kā jab dil meiN asar hogā
nādānī ke khar-i man ko ham āg lagā deinge
When the electricity of education takes its effect on the heart
We will add a spark to the mind of the ignorant donkey

[24] "*eik 'khātūn' kī khāyālāt,* [The perspective of a 'woman']," *Madīnah*, 22 January 1913.
[25] Meaning "clothing"
[26] "*eik 'khātūn' kī khāyālāt,* [The perspective of a 'woman']," *Madīnah*, 22 January 1913.

Fewer women contributed to *Madīnah* than to the noted ladies' home journals of the period such as *Tahzīb un-Niswān*.[27] Majīd Hasan's own wife contributed to the running of the newspaper,[28] although there is no evidence in the newspaper to suggest that his wife either wrote for or was involved in editorial decisions for *Akhbār-i Nisvān*.

It was a common practice for male reformers both to edit and write for women's newspapers either alongside female editors or alone.[29] The content and placement of advertisements in *Madīnah*, as well as the prevalence of gender-related content both before and after 1915, demonstrate the likelihood that men and women both read *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. In terms of content, *Madīnah*'s treatment of the debate regarding English education for women gestures toward a male audience. While most articles in the women's newspaper assumed a reformist approach to female education, dissenting voices did periodically appear. An article on education in 1912, included in the women's section, took a firm line against the education of women in anything other than religious principles and domestic duties.[30] The article outlined the risks of female education as the source of disrespect and unwomanly behaviour. As the unnamed author dismissed even vernacular education, without which women could not read his diatribe, it seems reasonable to assume that his target audience was male. The article also revealed a fascinating tension within the reformist *qasbatī* community in Bijnor. Education, while a linchpin of reformist attempts to regulate female behaviour, was also rife with risks to the masculine ideal.

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[27] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 368-370.
[28] Parvez Adil, personal correspondence with the author, April 2013.
[29] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 368-370.
[30] "*ta'alīm-i Nisvān* [Women's Education]," *Madīnah*, 15 August 1912.

Focusing on the relationship between father and child, as well as the role of the mother, also gestured toward the male audience of *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. In 1913, a piece appeared entitled "The Result of Pardah." The story was signed simply "khātūn" or woman. While this sort of signature was common in an era where a woman preferred to keep even her name in pardah,[31] the author may or may not have been a female. The story described a young girl and her father's struggle with destitution. When the father had seen an expensive doll, which he knew his daughter would love, he gave into the temptation and stole it. The man continued stealing to keep his little girl fed, clothed, and educated. When the little girl asked her father where her clothes came from, the man deplored his fall into moral depravity. The story described the miseries of poverty as an explanation for why a moral man turned to crime, but also highlighted the intoxicating nature of the girl's love for his father. The story, which appeared alongside reflections on the relationship between a mother and her child, may have appealed to male readers who understood only too well the tension between the need to provide for a family and Islam's strict moral standards.

The placement of advertisements targeted toward men on the page directly facing the women's section also made it more likely that men would read *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. Advertisements for shaving cream, business textbooks, scientific treatises, and English language courses were often included on the final page of the newspaper, immediately after the women's section. In this way, if a man opened the paper to view the advertisements his eye would have fallen on *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. Of course, in the habit that characterized newspaper readers of that period, men sitting together at *chai-khānā*s or in living rooms may have passed around pages of the paper to each other as they discussed

[31] "*natijah-yi pardah* [The Result of Pardah]," *Madīnah*, 15 October 1913.

the weekly news. In that case, the women's newspaper would have been included in another section targeted toward a general readership. In any case, prevalent reading practices of the period combined with low female literacy meant that male household members would have read *Akhbār-i Nisvān* out loud to illiterate female members of the household.

Even after *Akhbār-i Nisvān* disappeared in late 1914, women's issues found their voice in the form of creative works. After several months of focusing almost exclusively on World War I coverage, in mid-1915 women's issues returned to the fore. This time, the title of *"Akhbār-i Nisvān"* had disappeared, but the content and format of the page was otherwise similar. Although the emphasis on women's issues eventually faltered, the fact that the women's newspaper outlived its *modus operandi* affirms the argument that male as well as female readers would have been interested in the women's section of *Madīnah*.

Transgression in a Conservative Framework

In *Madīnah* language was a powerful indicator of female social status; in the context of a conservative, *qasbah*-based publication, the use of *begumatī zabān* would have been as illicitly entertaining as it was deplorable. One serialized short story with the cumbersome title "Oh, the most just of the just! Does the force of your commandments have no effect on the condition of the oppressed?" began with sensational intrigue. The story was published serially in *Madīnah* between June and August 1912. A man named Jabār married his second wife, without requesting the consent of his first wife, Halīmah, whose name meant "gentle"

or "mild-mannered."[32] Jabār failed to mention his second marriage to Halīmah until his new wife arrived in the home. The second wife, whose name was Dilpasand or "Heart's Desire," used colourful *begumatī zabān* to manipulate her husband into neglecting Halīmah and surrendering to her whims.

Halīma, a model woman and wife, had only one "fault": her higher education, which had given birth to an enlightened mind and progressive ideals. Although Jabār himself was educated, Halīma's education proved to be a stumbling block in their marriage. In the story's initial scene, Halīma sat writing a tearful letter to a close friend, Sadiqah. Jabār had forbidden Halīma to be in contact with Sadiqah, who had challenged her husband in an argument and won. Fearful that Sadiqah would be a poor influence on the gentle Halīma, he insisted that all contact be cut off. Halīma complied with his every desire in an attempt to compensate for her over-education. In contrast, Dilpasand's faults derived from her lack of education, which caused her to be ignorant, rude, and cruel to Halīma and Jabār. On the surface, this was a straightforward morality tale in the vein of Nazir Ahmed's *The Bride's Mirror*, which would have been part of the syllabus of any Muslim who had attended a government school or attended Aligarh. In contrast to Halīmah, "Heart's desire", morally crippled by her lack of education, employed every machination at her disposal to eject Halīma from the home and even to separate her from her son. She spent huge amounts of Jabār's money on jewels and trinkets, bringing him near financial ruin. Once Jabār realized his marriage to "Heart's desire" had significantly reduced his social standing, he finally understood "the true difference between knowledge and ignorance." He divorced Dilpasand and returned to Halīma. The simple allegory drew a clear connection between

[32] Raqmah "[Oh, the most just of the just! Does the force of your commandments have no effect on the condition of the oppressed?]," *Madīnah*, 5, 12 June 1912.

female education and the strength of the domestic sphere. The story also demonstrates the influence of Mughal cautionary tales, which warn men about the dangers of female manipulation. In Mughal cautionary tales, which only ostensibly focused on the manipulative, evil behaviour of the *courtesan*, the downfall of the *courtier* remained at the heart of the story.[33] In a similar way, Jabār's downfall served as a warning to male readers.

Looking deeper into this serialized story provides new insights regarding the place of gender ventriloquism in the reformist tradition as well. We have already established that men as well as women read *Akhbār-i Nisvān*. The story was signed with the female takhallus Raqmah; it is possible that either a woman or a man wrote the story. The specific treatment of *begumatī zabān* in this specific story, and the fact that the educated female voice of Halīmah employed Arabic quotations in a time period when female fluency in Arabic was extremely unusual, makes it probable that the author of this story was male. Male readers would have picked up on this fact as well.

In this story *begumatī zabān* highlighted Dilpasand's lack of education and status; just as importantly, it provided a source of entertainment and an outlet for voyeuristic curiosity in the story. Dilpasand's tendency to indulge in fits of apoplectic rage and rude bursts of idiomatic language pointed her out to readers as unworthy of her husband's protection and love. In contrast, Halīma spoke formally in the language associated with educated men. She usually used the formal address of "āp" when making requests of her husband, while Dilpasand used the more familiar verb form associated with "tum." Halīmah showed her husband deference and respect while Dilpasand addressed her husband casually. While Dilpasand's actions were deplorable, she remained the more interesting of

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[33] Katherine Butler Schofield, "The Courtesan Tale: Female Musicians and Dancers in Mughal Historical Chronicles, c. 1556–1748," *Gender & History* 24, no. 1 (2012): 152.

the two characters, providing readers both with a sense of moral superiority and amusement. She was a woman readers would have loved to hate.

The interaction below, between Halīma and Dilpasand highlighted the gulf separating the two women. In the scene, Dilpasand came to Halīma's room, where her son Jamīl often came to play and study. Dilpasand, jealous that Jabār and Jamīl had come to Halīma's room, came to investigate. Halīma, seeing her husband's second wife at the door, invited her kindly to sit down.

> Halīma (to Dilpasand): Sister, why are you standing? Take that chair, sit down.
> Dilpasand (who was irritated by Halīma's invitation): So it's on your invitation that I sit or stand. *You* aren't standing, and you have deceived everyone.
> [Jabār, understanding her sarcasm, became unsettled and looked towards her]
> Dilpasand [to Jabār]: You only get annoyed at what *I* say, that's it. I stick in your heart like a thorn. I don't want to disturb your meeting. I couldn't help myself, I came to see the boy. Look, I'm going.
> Jabār: Talk a little less hastily. You haven't seen the state of Jamīl. Since he has been sick, you haven't been once to see him. Today you come, and start a fight.
> Dilpasand (while going): Look, check your hoity-toity language. Of course I just *had* to start a fight, I only came here to scrunch everyone's eyebrows up. I came only a moment ago, and I'm a thorn in your side. Full of a fight for my enemies. Wow, Glory to God, now you've really let me have it, just shut up for a second. I'm not your property. I'm going now, so you can all chill out.

Readers would have quickly identified the sympathetic woman in the scene. Dilpasand, the trash-talking second wife, was the entertaining, scandalizing villain in contrast to the meek, soft-spoken Halīmah. But Dilpasand provided the story's interest and excitement.

Jabār was repeatedly warned by British authority figures for his failure to control Dilpasand. When he separated Jamīl from his mother on Dilpasand's request, his son fell deathly ill; it was only after an English doctor scolded Jabār that mother and son were

reunited. The little boy's health immediately improved, proving to Jabār and readers that he had been in the wrong. Later, an English nurse passed by the family house and heard Dilpasand haranguing her husband in *begumatī zabān*. The nurse suggested that Jabār take his wife to a mental hospital. By drawing the disapproval of the English, Dilpasand had brought dishonour not only on the family but the entire Muslim community. The nurse, repulsed by the man's domestic situation, discredited Muslims' ability to participate actively and equally in public life with Europeans. Without achieving order in the private space through regulating women's language and behaviour, men's attempt to achieve respectability in the British-dominated public could never be successful. "Raqmah's story warns readers: "It is true that bad deeds reap bad rewards."[34]

The author permitted Jabār to realize his mistake in marrying Dilpasand, once she had spent all of his money and ruined his reputation; in the story's conclusion he crawled back to Halīmah on her sick-bed. Conveniently, by that point Halīmah had received news of a windfall inheritance, which she generously gave to her husband. Male readers would have interpreted the story as a cautionary tale about the dangers of women untempered by education and therefore impossible to control.

The traditionally reformist story preserved elements of gender ventriloquism that linked it to a longer tradition of transvestist fantasy and illicit voyeurism, since it was most likely written by a man. The pattern in the story calls to mind a Shakespearean comedy, in which the middle acts cut loose the threads of social propriety and even gender identity. The final act deftly ties up all loose ends into the package of marriage and conventionality. While the Shakespearean model would have had no impact on the structure of Raqmah's

[34] Raqmah, *Madīnah*, 5, 12 June 1912.

story, the comparison demonstrates a comparative aesthetic model allowing audience members to indulge in voyeuristic ribaldry before ultimately affirming conventional virtue with a tidy ending. A closer comparison would be Nazir Ahmed *Mirāt 'ul-Arūs* or *The Bride's Mirror*, in which the narcissistic and selfish Akbarī provided the driving action for the first half of the book, allowing readers to voyeuristically experience the pleasures of impropriety and greed. Ultimately, Akbarī's gentler sister Asgharī demonstrated the benefits of education, discipline, and obedience in the latter half of the book. Although Asgharī's wisdom was incontrovertible, the account of her sister Akbarī's pettiness would have hooked readers, fascinated by her indiscretions and curious about her fate.[35]

According to Naim, only much later in the twentieth century in the works of 'Ismat Chugtāī (1915-1991) and Shaukat Thanawī (1904-1963) do we see the shrew muster up the audacity to engage with her husband in the an aggressive, pugnacious manner.[36] Analysis of this serialized story in *Madīnah* contradicts Naim's statement that shrewish women only fight with each other, not their husbands, in *rekhtī* -inspired literature. *Madīnah* was not known as a literary progressive. What creative pieces it included were often derivatives from other sources. This story demonstrates that the shrew had already begun to raise her shrill voice against her hen-pecked husband in Urdu literature in the early twentieth century. More importantly, however, the practice of gender ventriloquism was preserved in the amber of the reformist movement as a method of releasing pent-up tension between genders in a time of social reform, as well as in the pursuit of voyeuristic entertainment. It is important to note, of course, that sexual ribaldry, so common in the *rekhtī* tradition, was absent in *Madīnah*.

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[35] Nazir Ahmed, *Mir'at al-'urus*, Nawal Kishore Press, 1881.
[36] Naim, C.M., "Transvestic Words," 3-26.

Madīnah's use of *begumatī zabān* as early as 1912 demonstrated how reformist-influenced literature nevertheless preserved the pleasurable, voyeuristic nature of *begumatī zabān.* Between Naim's and Vanita's scholarship a gap remains between the gender ventriloquism of the mid-nineteenth century *rekhtī* and male prose authors' approach to women in the mid-twentieth century. It is as if according to scholarship transvestist artistic practices disappeared in the face of reformism; as if the old-school voyeurism of the nineteenth century *rekhtī* inhabited a separate literary universe than the ladies home journal. Vanita has written that the type of *rekhtī* she describes died out with the followers of Jān Sāhib.[37] Creative efforts in the reformist context contributed to keeping gender ventriloquism alive. *Madīnah*'s conservative reformist character both preserved and continued to shape the transvestist tendencies that most aptly revealed the boundaries of gender in relief.

Intimate Spaces Examined in Madīnah

Many other articles in the reformist *Akhbār-i Nisvān* soberly emphasized attention to health and hygiene. The women's newspapers instructed readers on the health-risks of flies and the necessity of keeping paan containers clean and organized."[38] The etiquette of eating also featured prominently. Women should sit with their feet covered, chew their food thoroughly and only upon finishing drink a sip of water (drinking water before or while eating was hard on the digestion).[39] It was healthier to consume salty dishes before sweet things. After eating, one article continued, one should not sit or sleep in extreme heat

[37] Vanita, "Gender, Sex, and the City," 213.
[38] "*ma<u>kh</u>īon se <u>kh</u>atra* [Risks from Flies]," *Madīnah*, 15 March 1913.; "*Pān*," *Madīnah*, 1 March 1913.
[39] "*<u>kh</u>ānā* [food]," 15 March 1913, *Madīnah*.

or cold, although resting was recommended. All of these articles mentioned above were anonymously authored, most likely penned by one of the small editorial team including the proprietor, the editor, and sub-editors. It is likely that these articles were penned by men, in keeping with the trend in *Madīnah* that unsigned articles were usually the product of the all-male editorial team. These instructive guides also served as windows into the secret world of the *zenana* that hovered like a mirage on the margins of Muslim, male life. Zahīn Karatpūrī's when he defended *Bihishtī Zeiwar* against accusations of obscenity, facilitated the removal of the discursive taboo on the intimate female space.[40] In practice, however, the women's world remained as separate as ever. To men, the *zenana* may have been a peaceful, safe haven associated with their earliest childhood memories as much as it was the context for shrewish female altercations. The articles, as well as possibly ladies' home journals more generally, remained a method of entering into the female experience, as well as colonizing it.

On the one hand these articles, demonstrating how *Madīnah* elided *sharīf* etiquette with elements of religious identity, underlined the blurring between the lines of public and private. Interestingly, much of this *sharīf* etiquette of food and drink has been preserved in *zenanas* of *qasbahs* across North India. On the other hand, when we consider that men wrote many of these explanations of standard female behaviour, these articles become exoticized ethnographies of an idealized female world. Through these articles, male authors and readers alike enter into and express discursive ownership of the exclusively female

[40] One article suggests that the decision is in part motivated by the claim that *Bihishtī Zeiwar* included obscene sections. If Pālanpūr excludes *Bihishtī Zeiwar* for obscenity, the author argues, then it must also apply the same standard of judgment to both the Qur'an and Hadith, which include articles on equally "obscene" topics. Another article attempts to end the controversy by reporting the decision of prominent members of Farengi Mahal that not only *Bihishtī Zeiwar* but also every work of Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi was a prime example of the principles of Islam.

world of the *zenana*.

It is difficult to capture the relationship between the *zenana* as a discursive space and that of a lived space. Some autobiographical sources have shed light on the lives of women in this period. Ladies' home journals that included letters to the editor sections written by women offer a glimpse into the *zenana* as a lived space. Minault has talked about how women benefitted in material ways from reformism.[41] In contrast, C.M. Naim's article on Bibi Ashraf has demonstrated how one Shi'a woman gained an Urdu education in the early twentieth century.[42] Bibi Ashraf, raised in Bahnera, a small village in Bijnor district, grew up in a household where it was customary for women to learn to read, but not write. In her community, reading was a sign of cultivation among women, while writing was at best unnecessary and at worst a source of temptation for women to reach outside the world of the *zenana*. Through cajoling, eavesdropping, and persistence Bibi Ashraf managed to teach herself not only to read Arabic and Urdu, but also to write in Urdu.[43]

In *Akhbār-i Nisvān* the Begum of Bhopal is reported as saying:[44]

> "Ladies! It is accepted that women are like the soul in the body of the *qaum* and the ignorance or education of women is a big part of its progress or destruction."

The Begum's phrase underlines not only the importance of women as protectors of cultural and religious values, but continues to herald the woman as a specific, segregated part of the Muslim community. Just as the soul is never seen or heard, women remained an internal

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[41] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 215-218.
[42] Naim, "How Bibi Ashraf Learned to Write, 99.
[43] Ibid., 106
[44] "*Bigum Sahiba*," *Madīnah*, 15 March 1913.

stronghold, a channel to the intimate connection to Islam.[45] The Begum's speech went on to encourage women to educate themselves in order to assist them in fulfilling their roles as wives and mothers. Other articles educated women on how to pray properly, scolding female readers for assuming that guidelines for prayer included in both the Qur'an and the Hadith were intended for men alone. All restrictions applied equally to men and women.[46] Even as the article on the Begum (again anonymously authored) attempted to bring female behaviour under the rubric of male propriety, the woman's place as the keystone of the community infused her with reverential significance. The female as source of physical and spiritual life (an anonymously authored article in *Madīnah* reported the birth of quadruplets in France) awed Majīd Hasan and his editorial team, even as the publication sought to bring the female experience under control. The treatment of female emotions in *Madīnah* created a liminal space between the prescriptive nature of female reformist education and the illicit voyeurism into women's emotive and physical spaces. Furthermore, this entry into intimate physical spaces hints at the walls between discursive and lived practices of *zenana*. *Madīnah* enabled the transgression of certain physical boundaries in print, while it is likely that the social norms of the *zenana* preserved many boundaries and taboos. This contrast between discourse and lived experience would have enhanced the transgressive nature of the newspaper's discussion on women's lives.

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[45] This attitude is reminiscent of the *hadith* transmitted by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami that marriage is like a fortress, standing as a protection against sin. In other words, marriage should protect its inhabitants from sin and increase virtue. "On the authority of Ali (the son-in-law of the Prophet), the Prophet said that marriage is the Great Hajj. Whosoever spends money saved up for Hajj on marriage, God will reward him the reward of Hajj. Marriage is a protection (lit: fortress) for the believer." Ibn Hajar al-Haytami. *Ahadith al-Nikah* [A Collection of Hadith Related to Marriage]. Mohsin Malik 'Ali, personal correspondence with author in Lucknow, 2 November 2013.

[46] "*khuda kī 'ibādat," Madīnah*, 15 August 1913.

Women and Magic in Madīnah

Intimate, physical spatiality was not the only category of experience over which *Madīnah* sought to exert control. Magic emerged as a source of spiritual power both indicative of superstition, but also unbridled power dangerous in female hands. A fascinating article entitled "Love of a Husband" recorded two female friends talking about family matters.[47] This article was anonymously authored, making it likely that a male contributor, or even perhaps the editor Zahīn Karatpūrī, had penned it. In the article a woman named Khurshīd, aware of her friend Māh's good relationship with her husband, asked:

> Dear Māh, tell me which device you use to make him consider your opinion equal to his own, so that he never dismisses your opinion as beneath his and always listens to you. Tell me that magic mantra that you use.

Khurshīd's language is good, even elegant. The clarity of structure and elevated vocabulary of both women would have made it clear to readers that they were educated *sharīf*. But at the same time, even a noble woman like Khurshīd was willing to employ magic to help repair her marital relationship.

Māh rebuked her friend for suggesting she would ever use magic to control her husband. In a kind and only slightly self-righteous way, Māh explained that a woman prepared to use magic against her husband was "like a snake brought into the home, ready at any time to strike." In saying this, Māh made clear that her objection to use of magic was not couched in a rational attack on its efficacy. Instead, she implied that unlike uneducated

[47]" *khāvand kī mohabbat* [love of husband]," *Madīnah*, 1 May 1913.

women who were not able to employ self-discipline, the use of magic was morally reprehensible.

Māh listed her own strategies for maintaining marital bliss: she only used her natural virtues to sweeten her husband's heart. She never deceived him, unless he was wrong. In that case she protected his ego by correcting him only when he had repeated the mistake. Then she approached him to explain the situation once he was in the right frame of mind to accept her opinion. Māh also advised her friend to not worry in front of her husband, but only to converse with him in a well bred, smiling manner. She closed her homily with an affirmation of a wife's primary duty: "Because it is woman's great, good fortune to keep her master, her husband, happy and to carry out his wishes." Māh proved herself to be sensible and articulate in formal Urdu. Her friend, however, would have given male readers a saucy glimpse into the risky uses of magic among women during the period.[48] Khurshīd gave both male and female readers a glimpse into the plight of a woman desperate to exercise some control over marital life. The article made clear that opposition to magic was couched not in rational, scientific arguments, but instead in the belief that magical devices were dangerous in the hands of women. At the same time, the article created the impression that such beliefs among *Madīnah*'s female readership were persistently damaging to husbands everywhere.

The conversation between Khurshīd and Māh hinted at the prevailing belief in magical solutions to intransigent problems of sex and love; both men and women

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[48] Dudney, Arthur. "Keeping the Magic Alive: How Devakīnandan Khatrī's Chandrakāntā, the First Hindi Best-seller, Navigates Western Modernity and the Fantastical," Accessed on Frances Pritchett's website, accessed 2 November 2013, http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00urduhindilinks/txt_dudney_chandrakanta.pdf. ; Francis Pritchett, "The Romance Tradition in Urdu: Adventures from the Dastan of Amir Hamza," (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

expressed dependence on mysticism and magic, properly performed, to exert control over love and sexuality. *Madīnah* published many guidebooks on magic in the paper. In one example, a contributor talked despondently about his memories of his "nāmard" or impotence, before he ran across a Hindu ascetic who solved his problem with a bottled remedy.[49] Interestingly, the process involved in the *faqīr*'s discovery remained vague; the potion was presented as an almost magical solution to the problems of male sexual performance and confidence. The advertisement dwelled on the cathartic act of detailing his embarrassing experiences to the *faqīr*; it represented the airing of secret woes as the first crucial step in finding the magical solution. In a similar way, female anxieties filtered through the male perspective allowed authors and readers alike to indulge in cathartic role-play.

In another article encouraging trust in the context of marriage, a woman's doubts regarding her husband's fidelity were revealed to be unfounded.[50] Her husband's behaviour had become increasingly suspicious, with repeated trips outside the home every evening. One night, when her husband left later than usual, she followed him. She lost sight of him, since night had fallen, and stopped outside of a shop she believed her husband had entered. A man who looked like her husband stepped out of the shop with a beautiful woman. When she drew closer, sure that the man was her husband, she realized that the pair was a husband and wife out for an evening stroll. She felt ashamed. When she returned home her husband realized that she had doubted him. The story demonstrated the fallacy, and the risks inherent in, wifely doubt. At the same time, the story gripped the reader

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[49] "*is paṛhne se bahutoN kā bhalā hogā* [There will be benefit to many on reading this]," *Madīnah*, 1 March 1913.
[50] "*mashkūk bīvī*," *Madīnah*, 22 August 1914.

precisely because of the woman's indiscretion. The woman who sat placidly at home as her husband gallivanted around the city at all hours of the night was not of interest to *Madīnah*'s readers. The virtuous woman, in the often binary pattern followed by nineteenth century and twentieth century reformist Urdu prose, offered no opportunity for instruction, and just as importantly she offered no entertainment to male readers seeking to affirm their masculinity by placing themselves above the wayward female in need of correction.

In another serialized story that emphasized the importance of religious education, the only daughter of a wealthy royal family in Lucknow described the death of her father and their family's loss of wealth.[51] The girl's mother became ill and depressed, leading her to fall further into poverty. A friend of the family, a Nawab, offered the girl's mother a job from a woman who needed a tutor for her son. The story ended prematurely, but until its truncation the story followed the model of other fictionalised accounts idealizing female education. The girl's mother may have refused the position, only to see her daughter nurse her back to health and social connectivity through her work as an *ustānī.* The story demonstrates echoes of themes present in Nazir Ahmed's *The Bride's Mirror*, in which Asgharī educates the local children of her mohalla, and in doing so secures an advantageous marriage for her youngest sister-in-law with the family of a local Nawab. But the story would have hooked its readership with the setting of disaster and ruin. The *qasbatī* elite, themselves only too aware of the fragility of their finances in light of decreasing patronage, would have used the article to affirm reformist ideals while revelling in *schadenfraude*.

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[51] "*eik sharīfzādī kī kahānī aur usī ghamnasīb kī zabānī* [A noble-woman's story and her words of sorrow]," *Madīnah*, 1, 15 August 1912.

In one issue of *Akhbār-i Nisvān*, two poems appeared entitled "Child" and "Mother."[52] In the first poem the child sang a song of praise to his mother, followed by his or her mother's response. The child compared her mother to a flower, creating a season of spring in which her offspring grow:

> What is a beautiful flower, compared to a good mother
>
> From whose scent the flower of the heart blooms.

We can look at the child-like voice in the poem as that of a little girl or boy, still wrapped in the cocoon of the *zenana* and idealizing the woman as a beautiful, almost sacred source of comfort. In her response (both of the poems were anonymously written, which points to male authorship) the mother rejected the comparison. She warned her son or daughter not to put faith in the fleeting beauty of the flower, which fades quickly. The implied importance of the eternal beauty of spiritual paradise stood in contrast to the "treacherous" flower:

> Enough, enough child lest you exhaust yourself,
> Your strange words become more and more surprising.
>
> My sweet dear, you have a sharp tongue
> You over-praised the flower
>
> Look, what is in the flower,
> In the beauty of the flower what superior thing is there,
>
> The spring of the unfaithful flower, it is treacherous…

[52] "*māN*," *Madīnah*, 15 June 1914.; "*bacchī*," *Madīnah*, 15 June 1914.

The educated mother used her knowledge of religious principle to guide her child's love away from even herself, and toward that which is eternal. But again, the first poem in the voice of the child presented a compelling counter-perspective. In the first poem readers may have found themselves drawn back into peace of the *zenana* and hazy memories of childhood contentment. The second poem disabused not only the child, but also the reader, of the sanctity of the mother. The verses tied up the loose ends of transvestist delight, in a poem associated with childlike joy in and dependence on maternal love.

Advocates for Pardah

Countless other contributions to *Akhbār-i Nisvān* in *Madīnah* would have provided opportunities not only for male authors to speak in the voice of women, but also readers to access the female perspective. One article, entitled "Golden principles from mothers" stated that every woman's primary duty, even above housework, was to teach their daughters to be good wives.[53] The article encouraged daughters to watch their mothers, and to resolve not to repeat mistakes that their mothers have made. The author attempted simultaneously to access the female perspective and to manipulate it. Another poem appeared entitled "Women's Pardah."[54] The poem, unsigned, was a polemic written in a female voice, against those who wished her to abandon pardah. The author refused to step a foot outside her door, insisting that pardah was a protection from the storms of life, and a place of peace and repose. Without it, a "storm" of life's troubles and woes would commence:

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[53] "*māoN kī vāstey sonharī asūl," Madīnah*, 22 March 1913.
[54] "[Women's Curtain]," *Madīnah*, 15 Febraury 1913.

They kept telling me that the devil's place is rest and repose
But I never took a step outside my house
I was born in pardah
And I am in pardah still.
Living in pardah I gained consciousness
In pardah rest and comfort comes easily
…
Can there be any worry in pardah, why would you leave it.
…
If there were no pardah a storm would hit

Madīnah's support of widow marriage also offered plenty of fodder for voyeurism. A poem entitled "Incitement to marry", encouraging widows to remarry, delved into the anatomy of female desire.[55] The poem was signed "Flaming Counsellor," referring to the fiery nature of the poem's content, and keeping the gender of the author ambiguous.

For what reason do widows not remarry?
When is it legal to cause youth to waste away?
What necessity is there to make silly excuses?
Whatever is not a desire for life is inhuman
If there is a stomach, then there is hunger,
There is little praise in hiding hunger.
I said yes, you didn't eat,
You wasted away your life.
In wasting away your life, you have acquired sin.
Both religion and the world sit wasted.
Those who stop this,
they are strangers to the community of Islam

The final apostles are disgusted with them
May God curse them all.

The analogy of a stomach and hunger acted as a veiled reference to female sexual desire. The vitriolic attitude toward the custom prohibiting widow remarriage affirmed the reformist position, seeking to eliminate undue external (re: Hindu) cultural influence in

[55] "*targh̲īb nikāh sānī*," *Madīnah*, 8 January 1916.

the form of a taboo against widow remarriage.[56] *Madīnah*'s self-identification as a conservative Muslim paper permitted the poem's flirtation with female sexuality.

Other articles in *Akhbār-i Nisvān* focused on the clothing and daily experiences of women as an expression of voyeuristic and transvestist impulses. An anonymously authored article ostensibly lauding women's charitable work in Meccah described the burqah's place in daily life in Meccah. The author described a scene in which burqahs flooded the streets of Meccah during his visit, demonstrating the prevalence of Islamic modesty. The author approvingly noted that burqah-clad women travelled easily throughout the city, presumably without being harassed by curious men. Expressing wonder at the variety of burqah styles available to women, he expressed a desire to delve deeper into research and to curate a museum display focusing on the burqah. Admitting with regret that he could not delve deeper into his research on burqahs without the assistance of a woman, he expressed not only a curiosity regarding the woman's world, but a longing for it. He was unable to understand fully the female experience because of his male status, which kept him at arm's length.[57] The tone of the article would have invoked the sympathies of male readers who both idealized the mysterious world of *zenanas* and *burqahs* and sought to colonise[58] it with reformist ambitions.

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[56] (Barbara Metcalf 1982); Muḥammad Ismāʻīl, *Taqwiyat-ul-Imān* (Dar-us-Salam Publications, 1995).

[57] "*mukhtalif bila-o Islāmī kī barqa'on kī shaklein*," *Madīnah*, 22 February 1914.

[58] By using the term colonise, I use it to express a desire among male reformists to regulate female behavior for the material and spiritual benefit of the Muslim community as a whole. By using this term, I do not intend to negate women's agency in how they choose to accept or reject reforms.

Women as warriors in Madīnah

The trope of the female warrior, throwing off the veil of *pardah* in order to fight the enemies of Islam, demonstrated the tensions inherent in male transvestist portrayals of women in *Madīnah*. While accounts of women warriors emphasized their empowerment, the framing of their experiences served ultimately to affirm traditional boundaries between genders. The female warrior first emerged in *Madīnah* during the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 and continued well into World War I. While it is difficult to determine the provenance of the several "eye-witness" accounts that emerged of women on the field of battle in the 1910's and early 1920's, what remained significant was the stories' content and reception. Women had become an obvious symbol of the courage and valour of the Muslim community. These women, by going so far beyond the constraints of what qualified as appropriate female behaviour, achieved mythical status. They had sacrificed traditional femininity for the glory of Islam and an empire that protected that religion. Their transgression would have rendered their decision more powerful to readers.

Female bodyguards or warriors in the Mughal context had been lower-status women appointed to protect *zenanas*.[59] While not unheard of in the historical context, then, the practice of *sharīf* women crossing those boundaries would have been more remarkable. In *Madīnah* accounts of women as warriors emerged in connection with the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, presenting them alternately as brave, bloodthirsty fighters and pitiable victims of violence. In one 1912 example, a journalist described two Arab women fighting

[59] Karuna Sharma, "A Visit to the Mughal Harem: Lives of Royal Women," *Journal of South Asian Studies* XXXII, no. 2 (August 2009), 168.; Soma Mukherjee, *Royal Mughal Ladies and their Contributions* (Delhi: Gyan Books, 2001), 39-40.

on the side of the Ottomans: a young woman and her mother, who was about sixty years old.[60] The two women had taken guns and gone out on the field of war to fight on the side of the Ottomans, and "with daring and bravery" fired on the enemy. According to the article, their feat was equal to the service of armoured cavalry soldiers.

The women entered into the battlefield with little regard for their own safety. The young woman, unnamed, seemed to speak directly through the reporter to readers: as long as "enemies" threatened to take away her country, there could be no fear of death. She affirmed: "It is better if we die and our country continue to live, then for us to live and our country fall into the hands of the enemy." Their risk ended in tragedy. The old woman was hit by a bullet, and tried to hide this from her daughter. But eventually her health failed to the extent that was forced to say her final goodbyes. She affirmed sacrifice, however, telling her daughter: "I have already given three sons to this war. And now I too happily go to God." The old woman even encouraged her daughter to sacrifice herself for the sake of her country, since only when she had given all of her children to the cause of the country would she feel at rest. The anonymous correspondent ended the tragic article describing the surge of nationalist feeling the old woman's sacrifice had inspired in him. Since the correspondent was writing in Urdu, and therefore presumably South Asian, the nationalism that he referred to was proto-Khilafat in character. Again here the women transcended conceivable boundaries of "proper" female behaviour to illustrate the development of a novel pan-Islamic awareness.

Before she died, the mother pushed her son to continue in battle, forbidding him to ever retreat, "because you are the son of those ancestors who quickened the history of with

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[60] "*maidān-i jang meiN do 'arabiya 'aurateiN mān beṭī* [On the field of war, two Arab women, mother and daughter]," *Madīnah*, 22 August 1912.

brave deeds." At the sound of these words the son became brave again and "his steps grew quicker." He later presented himself and his warrior sister as gifts and "sacrifices" sent by his father (interestingly, he does not mention his mother as the sender). The daughter put on men's clothes and joined her brother in battle against the Italians. Seeing the piles of corpses, she "could not explain how happy it made me. I embraced my brother and began to cry tears of joy." The woman found a visceral energy from the sight of Italian bodies. The ecstasy she experienced at the sight of death provided an emotive link between readers and the soul of the community.

In a 1912 Eid-commemoration issue, a prose piece purportedly penned by a woman in Tripoli appeared.[61] The title read: "Dear crescent! Doubtless, the key to the heart's delight of believers." The woman had remained on the field of battle after her husband fell victim to Italian soldiers. The holy sign of Eid – the moon – was her only companion. She both revelled in the violence of the battlefield and mourned the loss of her husband:

> My husband, the oppressed, has already fallen victim to Italian soldiers – I have already pressed down on the blood of the corpses of the battlefield, having stacked them on my shoulders. Their moonlike faces drift before my eyes and their black locks, turning into snakes, are returning to my heart.

Even in her suffering, the moon remained consistent. The corpses of the enemy soldiers, in their pale, clammy state, became the sign of a sacred spiritual moment. In a sense this negates a poetic concept of the moon in Urdu, in which the moon was synonymous with the beauty of the beloved. But the death-state of the enemy stood in as the beloved, the

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[61] "*eik mujāhid tarāblis kī bīvī kā halāl 'īd*, [The halal Eid of a warrior's wife in the Balkans]," *Madīnah*, 15 September 1912.

yearned-for result of bloody battle. Interestingly, the style of prose mimicked that of a *marsīyah*; furthermore, just as in the *marsīyah* mourning enabled spiritual access to the divine.

Not all women who participated in war emerged victorious in *Madīnah*, or were allowed to fight. A wired account from the Balkans reported that a noble woman had entered into the field of battle in August 1912.[62] As a result, the Italians set her hair and hat on fire. The article deplored the death of the woman at the hands of the Italians as a sign of moral corruption, since "such a powerful Sultanate as that of Italy did not shrink away from attacking a woman." In another article, entitled "On the field of war, the love of *qaum* and zeal for religion of women," a correspondent reported encountering a group of women bringing water to soldiers. The women clamoured to be allowed to fight – in this instance they were not permitted to do so. The correspondent observed that these women were no less *mujāhidīn* or warriors in their actions, since they faced loss of life in crossing the lines of combat to bring thirsty soldiers the water of life.[63] These accounts sought to shame men into enthusiastic support for the Ottoman cause, offering an implicit comparison between the woman prepared to sacrifice her life and a weak man unwilling to make the ultimate sacrifice.

The majority of women-warrior accounts in *Madīnah* emphasized the physical pleasure women took in the death of her enemies. In one instance, a correspondent recounted the engagement story of a Turkish woman, who would only assent to marry if her young man stole fifty Italian cannons and brought them to her. As *meher*, the judge

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[62] "*eik sharīf 'aurat maidān-i jang meiN* [A noble woman on the field of war]," *Madīnah*, 22 September 1912.
[63] "*jang-i iṭalī tarkī kī baqīya khabereiN*," *Madīnah*, 22 September 1912.

demanded the corpses of fifty Italian soldiers. The article writes from the perspective of the woman's husband in an admiring tone about her commitment to the national cause, thanking God that he was able to fulfil her requirements by stealing the requisite number of cannons. While at the time of his wedding he had already killed twenty Italian soldiers, when he was interviewed "there [were] only thirty Italian soldiers left to kill." The article concluded with the fervent hope that, God willing, he would be able to fulfil the *meher* quickly.

Significantly, *Madīnah* praised women warriors and used their participation to shame male readers. The journalist wondered: "what level the condition of men has come to when women have taken on half the role of men." A woman was permitted to step out of that sphere in order to be used to spur men onward to brave deeds, but the exceptional nature of her sacrifice ultimately affirmed the unnatural nature of the role reversal. The warrior woman portrayed in *Madīnah* stepped beyond the curtain separating the genders, allowing male readers the rare vicarious experience of female emotive power. The female warrior vibrated with conviction, wept with joy over the blood of her enemies. But at the same time, her transgressive, nearly limitless power remained contained by its purpose – to demonstrate to men their own failings.

Looking at women as warriors, in the context of war, delineated the boundaries of community by looking at women who had gone beyond the pale in the face of a foreign threat. These examples had as much to do with the norms of comportment and the role of men as they did with the actions of women. The Kali-esque imagery of the female capitalized on the radical shoring up of the domestic sphere. By implication, the threat inspiring such a rebellion against propriety must be great indeed. This treatment of the

Muslim woman, who stepped outside of the *zenana* only in the times of direst need, stood in contrast to European culture in *Madīnah*, where according to correspondents the proper order of genders had been comically, and sometimes in a titillating manner, reversed.

Male Anxiety

Madīnah's emphasis on regulation of domestic matters confirmed already well-documented arguments that Islam's shift to the private sphere created anxiety regarding what were previously private areas of life. [64] Rosalind O'Hanlon has looked at the importance of male norms of comportment as a motivation for intensification of the relationship between manhood and political power.[65] Mrinalini Sinha has looked at the non-binary intersection of themes relating to power, sexuality, and nationalism in her study of Bengal.[66] Both of these works deal with the concept of male anxiety in the face of social change as both a symptom of and participant in colonial discourse. There remains a gap, however, in relating this idea of non-binary discourse to the twentieth century Urdu language context and reformist literature particularly.

Transvestist pleasure, facilitated by the transgression of gender boundaries in the service of reformist ideals, also appeared in *Madīnah* in company with anxieties regarding virility and males' financial solvency. Sexual performance and knowledge about sex were major sources of concern for *Madīnah*'s male readers. In advertisements science book publishers capitalized on this concern. Complete with colour illustrations printed in Paris,

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[64] Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 107.; Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1989).
[65] Rosalind O'Hanlon, "Manliness and Imperial Service in Mughal North India," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, No. 1 (1999), 47-93.
[66] Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 1-10.

one book offered to provide illustrative information on the differences between genders.[67] Although ostensibly a guide to cure disease, one of the major draws for such a book would have been the ability for readers to learn about the distinction between male and female anatomy, sanitized with Western scientific terminology. Other businesses claimed in advertisements to have cures for ailments ranging from *kājī*, or perversity, to *nāmard*, lack of manliness or impotence.[68] Illustrated advertisements for aphrodisiacs (for use on wives only, of course) also appeared.[69] Often these advertisements would appear on the page facing the women's newspaper, repeating for weeks or months at a time. These advertisements continued to appear after *Akhbār-i Nisvān* was discontinued as well. The visual juxtaposition of the women's section and advertisements for impotence cures highlighted two elements of the female reformist perspective that lay in tension with each other: first, the necessity to remove boundaries between genders, and second, the corresponding anxiety regarding male sexual and financial performance.

Europe as Cautionary Tale and Playground

Madīnah's discussion of the female police in Britain related to the developing discourse on women warriors and anxiety about male gender identity.[70] One article stated that it was strange and noteworthy when a woman sacrificed her own safety and security for the good of others and her country. According to this view, when a woman stepped outside of the domestic sphere, they should do so only temporarily to address immediate danger. This model was contrasted favourably against that of Britain, where women

[67] "*aurat kyā kehetī hai?* [What do women say?]," *Medinah*, 13 November 1919.
[68] "*mardon kī zindagī* [Lives of Men]," *Medinah*, 15 September 1913.
[69] "*talā* (aphrodisiac)," *Medinah*, 13 January 1919.; "*talā* (aphrodisiac)," *Medinah*, 17 January 1919.
[70] "*inglistān kī zināna polis* [The female police of England]," *Madīnah*, 15 October 1915.

regularly joined the police force. In Britain, according to one article, women's participation in policing had become dangerously commonplace. The anonymously authored article implied that while fictional women warriors were admirable metaphors for resistance, making female participation the norm would be risky to society. In a report from a hospital in Glasgow in Scotland, where women were increasingly working alongside men, a male patient reported being examined by women.[71] He described, in his letter to *Madīnah*, arriving in a room where several female nurses asked him to strip nude before examining him, touching his back and other parts of his body. Other male patients in the same room had experienced the same, shocking treatment. *Madīnah* tells the story as a nightmare scenario, in which authoritative women initiated the violation of physical boundaries usually policed by men. The horrified tone of the author would have made the titillating details of the nude examination even more exciting.

Other less erotic articles discussed the financial emasculation of men by women. One example reported that unmarried women had decided to unionize.[72] The 1913 article in the general section of the paper described a reported American custom in which unmarried women agreed on a minimum salary for their future husbands. According to the women's union, their future husbands would need a minimum annual salary of 15,000 rupees. Ideally, they would earn 30,000 rupees. This article would have been an emasculating nightmare for male readers; the scenario would have presented America as dystopia in which men allowed themselves to be robbed of their power to choose a mate. Instead of emphasizing character and adherence to religious principles, marriageable women in America excluded men entirely from consideration if they were not solvent. This

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[71] "*eik afsosnāk haqīqat kā inkishāf* [Report of a regretful reality]," *Madīnah*, 1 August 1917.
[72] "*rūpīyā se shādī* [Marriage to Money]," *Madīnah*, 8 February 1913.

article highlighted male anxiety without direct reference to erotic content. Significantly, this article, in contrast to the more transgressive description of female doctors, was more open-ended in its assessment. Although the article described the American women's reported behaviour, the newspaper allows readers to draw its own conclusions. Female unionization for fair marriage certainly was less transgressive than reports of women employed to undress and examine men. *Madīnah*'s entry on female doctors was explicitly disapproving, in contrast.

Articles deploring the moral standards of Westernized Indian or European women explored transgressive role-reversal, in which the female served as the dominant figure. As early as 1917, *Madīnah* published announcements by women seeking marriage.[73] The ad read:

> I am a beautiful young lady:
> A very beautiful, pretty young lady wants to get married.
> Seeking loving young men of grace and liveliness

It is significant that the woman in the above ad used the English word "Lady" instead of the Urdu equivalent to describe herself. This set the woman apart as modern; her knowledge of at least a few English words and her bold decision to advertise herself would have gone hand in hand for *Madīnah* readers. Interestingly, even though *Madīnah* had published articles opposing English education for women, Majīd Hasan chose to include a personal advertisement in which a woman used "English" vocabulary. The publication's conservative framing allowed it to absorb the apparent internal contradiction.

Sensational articles regarding foreign women painted a picture of the Western woman as an independent, strong-willed creature with loose morals. Significantly, similar

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[73] "*maiN khubsūrat naujavān laidī hūN* [I am a beautiful young lady]," *Madīnah*. 17 July 1917.

kinds of sensationalist stories featuring Indian women never appeared in *Madīnah*. The European woman was a cautionary tale to *Madīnah*'s readers of the consequences of too much freedom. At the same time, stories of the European woman allowed *Madīnah* the latitude to include salacious stories that would have hooked readers. One article divulged details of the elopement of a high status, European woman and her actor lover.[74] Another reported the suicide of a prominent American socialite, and still another story reported a German man's suicide on the funeral bier of his captivating sweetheart.[75] A foreign woman who married an Indian man in Britain caused quite a stir when they divorced in 1917. The court case arbitrated between the wife's accusation of neglect and abuse, and the husband's accusation if infidelity. The judge found the accusation of infidelity sound, but awarded the wife the cost of the legal fees since she had been beaten at risk of her life. The judge ruled that the man had a right to hit his wife, but not to the extent that it caused her danger. *Madīnah*'s coverage of the article mocked the overly equitable method of the judge, suggesting that both parties should have been punished. The editors quipped, "But we ask, does the woman also have the right to sometimes hit her husband in the same way?"[76] With this statement, *Madīnah* mocked the Indian man, who had been emasculated by European courts and his European wife. The court not only prohibited him from beating his wife, but in a nightmare scenario may even have allowed her to beat him instead. The European woman was a spoiled, unfaithful woman rather than an object of pity. This last example is the only example we see in *Madīnah* of a mixed marriage, in which the reality of the European female became not just a titillating sideshow, but a material threat to Indian

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[74] "*eik lārd kī beṭī ke aikṭar ke sāth nikal gayī* [A lord's daughter ran away with a theater actor]," *Madīnah*, 1 November 1917.
[75] *Madīnah*, 1 May 1913, 8.
[76] "*farangan bīvī aur hindūstānī shauhar* [Foreign wife and Indian husband]," *Madīnah*, 17 July 1917.

masculine identity. *Madīnah*'s male readers would have been able to enjoy the sensationalist reports of European women's sexual and moral depravity not only as *schadenfraude*, but also as an opportunity to access a world of female dominance and gendered ambiguity within the safe space of a conservative Muslim forum.

Conclusion:

In this chapter I have taken the first step toward filling a gap in scholarship between discussions of gender ventriloquism of the late nineteenth century and treatment of women in mid-twentieth century literatures. I have done this by expanding discussions of women's reformist papers to discussions of its impact on male as well as female audiences, as well as exploring in greater detail the structure of a conservative publication's approach to female issues. At a time when the superiority of Islam, South Asian cultural tradition, and European dominance were all being reformulated, *Madīnah*'s self-framing as a conservative publication enabled gendered transgressions that enabled readers and authors a wider set of strategic options. I demonstrated through close reading how *Madīnah* newspaper's treatment of women allowed male authors and readers access to physical and emotional intimacy with women, the pleasure of which stood in tension with anxieties regarding male virility and sexual potency. Transvestist and voyeuristic themes in *Madīnah* enabled the exploration of otherwise transgressive themes within the safe space of a conservative Muslim publication. The newspaper not only facilitated transgression of gender divisions in a religious sense, but also enabled male readers intimate access to the female perspective, which could become a source of transvestist pleasure. Ultimately, however, *Madīnah*

reaffirmed the importance of Islam's superiority and South Asian cultural tradition among women through criticism of European anarchy of gender and sexual liberation.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This study has challenged the assumption that the *qasbah* stood apart from the vibrant development of an Urdu public in the early twentieth century. *Ashrāf* in *qasbah*s, through newspaper publications, engaged intimately with issues of local, national, and international importance, successfully engaging with views beyond their original geographic limitations. The *qasbah* newspaper conversation was not separate from the Urdu public sphere; it became intrinsically linked with the newspaper conversation spreading across North India in the first half of the twentieth century. At the same time, the expansion of the geographic horizon of the newspaper public into the *qasbah* context in the years immediately following and preceding the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the non-cooperation movements brought new voices to the conversation which would be influential in determining the parameters of Muslim, *ashrāf* identity.

The *qasbah*'s cultural heritage resulted in a heterogenous set of settlements that nevertheless share common features. These features included a small population, the existence of a large Muslim minority or a Muslim majority, administrative infrastructure dating from the Mughal period, and kinship networks associated with land ownership and government administrative work. The history of Bijnor *qasbah* demonstrates the importance of the individual context in preparing its newspapers for increased social resonance: proximity to Delhi, its kinship groups' (particularly the Shaikhs') long history of association with Mughal and British power, and relative isolation from Delhi created the ideal incubator for what would become a significant voice for many of India's Muslims. The complex net of interweaving influences influencing Bijnor's particular cultural history is

clear, demonstrating the need for heavily contextualized analysis of the *qasbah* environment.

Large urban centres such as Lucknow, Lahore, Calcutta, and Delhi remained influential in the development of the Urdu literary public in the nineteenth century. Into the scene of an expanding Urdu public came the increased participation of *ashrāf* in *qasbah*s through newspapers, at the time offering a localized, yet nationally resonant approach to a variety of issues affecting Muslims. Analysing the voice of the *qasbah* newspaper gives voice to a new set of relevant perspectives, relevant to scholarly exploration of the development of the Muslim *qaum* as imagined community. *Qasbah* newspapers often grew out of local-based newsletters, which had been limited to local agricultural or trade matters; its audience was the *ashrāf* community, which had relatively high levels of literacy. In the early twentieth century, the advancement of telegraph and railway technology facilitated the participation of *qasbah*-based *ashrāf* literate in Urdu in a public sphere via the medium of newspaper. The conversation among Urdu newspapers reflected an awareness of other papers, and worked to enshrine the newspaper conversation as representative to the Muslim *qaum*. Differences in technical approaches, design, and relationship to secular politics emerged among *qasbah*-based newspapers. These publications placed themselves on equal terms with publications originating in large areas through their defence or criticism of *Hamdard*, *Zulqarnain*, *Comrade*, and even *The Times of India* and *Pioneer*. *Madīnah*'s rapidly increasing circulation numbers and the increased circulation of other *qasbah* newspapers, which capitalized on the connection to both the *ashrāf* and the *qasbah* context, indicated a resonance between these perspectives and the Urdu public at large.

The development of the Urdu newspaper public, as based in large urban centres, drew from both Mughal *akhbārāt* models and English language newspaper models. Influenced by the vernacularization of language in the nineteenth century as well as by wider dissemination of religious knowledge and authority, Urdu speakers increasingly identified with other speakers of Urdu through the medium of print. This increasing dominance of Urdu as an essential aspect of *ashrāf* identity manifested itself in an emphasis on Islam as well. *Madīnah* is an exemplar of the *qasbah* newspaper, which demonstrated the emphasis of the local Bijnor environment on political affiliations and approaches to national policies. While initially maintaining a clear bias toward the old guard of the All-India Muslim League as a result of links to the landed elite, and later on to Congress, *Madīnah* simultaneously balanced its political objections with its perceived duty to provide a public forum for all Muslims who valued Islam as a guiding force. This approach succeeded in conflating *ashrāf* and Muslim identities, reflecting a broader shift among *ashrāf* at the time.

Madīnah demonstrated the expanding geographic horizons of the *qasbah*. Expansion of technologies, or lack of this expansion, influenced the material fate of individual *qasbah*s such as Bijnor. Revolutionary technologies such as the telegraph and the railway did not result in the wholesale adoption of political and social views held at political centres. Instead, inhabitants of *qasbah*s used the technologies to petition colonial bodies, and increasingly to petition the Indian National Congress and All-India Muslim League, for access to institutions, funding, as well as to promote local priorities on the national stage. The *qasbah*'s anxiety to access knowledge and interpret it to the advantage of the local environment using the newspaper, demonstrates that the newspaper was an increasingly

important stage on which battles of lasting importance were fought, won, and lost.

Local interpretation of reformist attitudes toward women in Bijnor also lends new insights. *Madīnah* demonstrated that men as well as women were likely to have read reformist publications previously thought to be read by women only. Furthermore, close readings of newspaper passages reveal robust fascination and curiosity with the female experience, revealing a complex set of reactions to inhabiting the female experience, ranging from concern, curiosity, delight, and profound anxiety. By looking at a local manifestation of women's reform, diverse approaches have emerged. Reformer aims to regulate women's habits, behaviours, and beliefs, and women's authentic, diverse responses to that regulation are only two aspects of the reformist trend. The popularity of *Madīnah* further suggests that this specific approach, indicating a more complex range of engagements with the female experience, may have broader significance across North India as well.

Qasbah newspapers demonstrate trends both in keeping with otherwise documented trends, as well as problematizing existing narratives. These papers were more likely to underline the connection between Islam and gentlemanly behaviour; were more likely to remain suspicious of Hindu involvement; and expressed early ambivalence regarding the nationalist project, especially as it extended to the necessity of accepting All-India League's voice as representative of Muslims. These trends all have broader implications for North India, suggesting that these small-town newspapers may have been one method by which these approaches were incubated, nourished, and maintained.

Analysis of one *qasbah* newspaper, *Madīnah*, has demonstrated the importance of local context in translating national trends to the local context, and exposes the risk of

eliding *qasbah*s into other types of urban life. Indeed the unique nature of *Madīnah*'s narrative, influenced by the priorities of its editors and local political realities as much as by the geographic isolation and Indo-Persian tradition that *qasbah*s share, exposes the risk of treating *qasbah*s as a homogenous category. More research is needed into the particular character of the *qasbah* as a unit of urban life; in a period when India demonstrates one of the highest rates of urbanization in the world, a better understanding of the thinnest layers of urban life offers insight into the transformations urbanization imparts. This analysis of *Madīnah* and Bijnor, in the context of a thriving conversation between *qasbah* based publications, has challenged a few grand narratives: the assumption that proponents of the old guard of the All-India Muslim League were all landed elites; that female reformist publications for women were targeted only to women; that 'ulama and secular politicians did not participate in the same conversations regarding public and political life, in the same public spaces; perhaps most importantly, that the *qasbah* newspaper culture was a mere derivative of English-language models and Indian-language papers in large urban centres. The expansion of the newspaper conversation into *qasbah*s broadened the base of the Urdu public sphere, which increasingly became synonymous with the Muslim *qaum*. It was these *ashrāf*, associating religious and national identity with the Indo-Persian ideals for which the *qasbah* stood as a paradigm, which would be as likely to remain in India, as they would be likely to relocate to Pakistan following Partition.

Research on local manifestations of Urdu print in the early twentieth century demonstrates how print interacted with other modes of communication to facilitate community formation at the local level. Analysis of the heterogenous, sometimes cacophonous conversation among *qasbah*s, even as it demonstrates the synthesis of

identity, place, politics, religion, and reformism, just as importantly complicates existing narratives.

Appendix I: Glossary

ʻalim (ʻālim; pl. ʻulamā)- a learned man, usually used to denote a man with significant learning in Islamic religious and legal studies

anjuman – association, usually of Muslims

ashrāf – noble by birth or status; usually used in reference to one of four communities, including Syed, Shaikh, Pathan, and Mughal

darbar (darbār) – a public gathering in honour of an Indian ruler or high-ranking British official during the colonial period

dars-i nizami (dars-i niẓāmī) – a syllabus of religious education influential among Muslims from the eighteenth century, with origins among the Farangī Mahallīs of Lucknow

fatwa (fatwa, pl. fatāwā) – a decision on a point of Islamic law, delivered by an ʻalim

hadith (ḥadīṯ) – the reported sayings or actions of the Prophet Muhammad

hafiz (ḥāfiẓ) – a person who has memorized the Qur'an

ijazat (ijāzat) – permission granted by one with authority to teach a subject, usually a religious or legal text

khilafat (khilāfat) – successorship

khwajah (khwājah) – honourific title

maktab – primary school

masjid – mosque

maulana (maulānā) – a title usually applied to an ʻalim, but during the Khilafat movement extended to, or assumed by, the politically influential[1]

Nadwat-ul-ʻulama: literally "congress of scholars," this is the name given to the educational institution founded for Muslims in Lucknow in the late nineteenth century

namaz (namāz) - prayers

[1] This definition draws from Robinson, Francis. *Separatism among Indian Muslims*. 437.

pir (pīr) – spiritual guide and master

qasbah – a town usually characterized by a significant Muslim minority or majority, with historical ties to Sufi ritual, Mughal patronage, and colonial administration

subah (ṣuba') – a district or province (a Mughal term, also applied during the colonial period)

takhallus (takhallus) – a pen-name attached to a poet, used to sign literary works

tahsil (tihsīl) – revenue district held by a tahsildar

tahsildar (tihsīldār) – one who holds rights over a revenue district

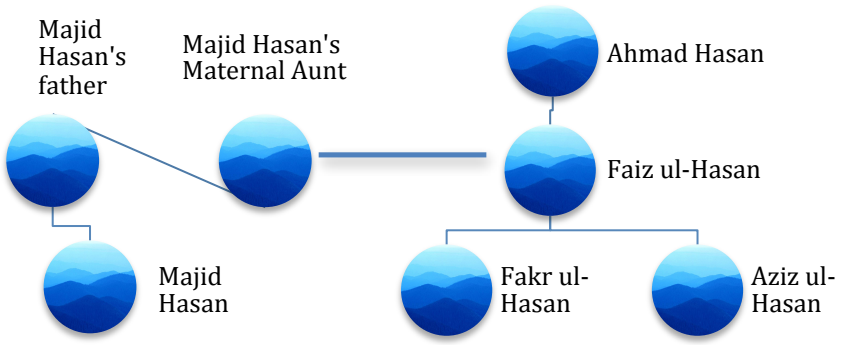
taluqdar (tāluqdār) – landowner with proprietory rights to the revenue of lands

waqf – a trust set aside for charitable purposes, to be maintained in perpetuity

zenana (zināna) – the section of a Muslim home where only women may enter, or their immediate male relatives

Appendix II:

Shaikhs of Bijnor Involved in Madīnah Press



Appendix III:

Selection of Population Numbers for *Qasbah*s in the United Provinces, 1901[2]

Qasbah Name	Total Population	# Muslims	# Hindus
Bijnor	17, 583	9, 429	7,778
Budaun	39, 031	21,995	16, 033
Rai Bareli	15, 880	6,955	8,825
Amroha	40,077	29,517	10, 264

[2] Compiled from *DG Budaun Bijnor, Moradabad, Bareilly, Bara Banki*, *Budaun* 1901-1914.

Appendix IV: Literacy Numbers in UP, 1911

Sample Muslim literacy numbers in United Provinces, 1911[3]

Name of settlement (city or *qasbah*)	Population	Total Literate (in any language)	Literate in English
Amroha*[4]	30,812	1,519	140
Bareilly	58, 470	3,738	606
Budaun*	22,714	2,182	315
Cawnpore	46,940	3,881	700
Fyzabad	14,241	1,592	281
Koil (Aligarh)	28,279	1,785	296
Lucknow	103,578	10,227	2,268
Meerut	49,647	3,302	510
Moradabad	48,053	3,281	499
Sahāranpūr*	34,626	2,449	393

Sample Hindu literacy numbers in United Provinces, 1911[5]

Name of settlement (city or *qasbah*)	Population	Total Literate (in any language)	Literate in English
Amroha*[6]	52,229	4,957	1,029
Bareilly	144,598	26,292	606
Budaun*	22,714	2,182	5,464
Cawnpore	28,553	3,513	590
Fyzabad	30,794	4,926	1,576
Koil (Aligarh)	145,095	14,511	4,859
Lucknow	58,918	9,098	1,158
Meerut	25,006	2,026	450
Moradabad	44,818	8,059	914
Sahāranpūr*	13,620	1,220	77

[3] Compiled from (*Census 1911 Vol. XV* 1912, 150)
[4] *Qasbah*s are starred
[5] Compiled from (*Census 1911 Vol. XV* 1912, 148-149)
[6] *Qasbah*s are starred

Appendix V: Proposal for qualifications for electors in Bijnor, 1913[7]

Qualifications of electors	Existing	Proposed	Proposed in Sec. 25 to meet objections from Muhammadans
Ownership	Rs. 24 a year rental of houses owned	Rs. 48 a year	Rs. 24 a year
Rental	Rs 2 per mensem	Rs. 4 per mensem	Rs. 2 per mensem
Land Revenue	Rs. 50 a year	Rs. 100 a year	Rs. 50 a year
Muafi	Nil	Rs. 100 a year inserted by Govt.	R. 50 a year
Tenant	Nil	Nil	Rs. 100 a year to meet the case of agriculturalists
Income	Rs. 200 a year	Rs. 300 a year	Rs. 200 a year
Office holder	Nil	As generally passed for other places	No change suggested
Degree	Nil	Graduate of the Allahabad University	No change suggested
Tax	Rs. 2 a year	Rs. 5 a year	No change suggested

[7] Table reproduced from from "Amendments of Election Rules Bijnor 1913," Municipal Records, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, 2-3.

Appendix VI: Editors and Sub-editors of *Madīnah*, 1912-1948

Maulvi Syed Nur ul-Hasan Zahīn Karatpūrī (editor 1912, 1916-1917)

Home Town
Kiratpur *qasbah*
Education
Local madrasah
Career
Boasting only limited education, Nūr ul-Hasan Zahīn Karatpūrī established his reputation on his journalistic endeavors. Blind, he also became a noted dream interpreter.

Syed Muhammad La'iq Hussain Qavi Zamarrud-raqam (sub-editor, 1912-1915)
Home Town
Amroha
Education
Local madrasah
Career
His *takhallus* translated as "emerald-pen," signifying his fame as a calligrapher, which became a trademark for the *Madīnah*.

M. Agha Rafiq Bulāndshehrī (editor, 1913-1915)
Home Town
Bulandhshahr city, Bulandhshahr district
Education
Local madrasah
Career
He presided over *Madīnah*'s involvement in the Kanpur Mosque uproar.

Mazhar ud-Din Shairkoṭī (editor, 1917-1921)
Home Town
Shairkoṭ *qasbah*, Bijnor district
Education
Deoband. Initially educated by Maulānā Abdul Qayūm Arshaq and Miyānji Sa'ad Allah Sahib, he went on to attend Deoband, where he was a pupil of Maulānā Mahmud ul-Hasan Asīr Mālṭā, known as Shaikh ul-Hind
Career
After completing his education at Deoband, he worked on a newspaper in *Dastūr* in Shairkoṭ *qasbah* and then edited *Nagīnah* in the city of the same name. After leaving *Madīnah* in 1921 he went on to edit the Naginah-based paper *Almān*.

Badarul Hasan Jalali (editor, 1921-1927)
Home Town

Moradabad city, Moradabad district
Education
B.A.
Background

Nurul Rahman (editor, 1928)
Home Town
Bacchraon *qasbah*, Amroha district
Education
B.A.
Background
Shaikh

Mohammad Ahsan (sub-editor, 1928-?)
Home Town
Bacchraon *qasbah*, Amroha district
Education
local madrasah
Background
Shaikh
Career
Ahsan was also an administrative clerk, in government service.

Nasrullah Khan (sub-editor, 1924-1928; editor, 1929-1947)
Home Town
Gujranwala, Panjab
Education
B.A.
Background
Son of Mohammad Sharif Ullah Khan

Hamidul Ansari Ghazī (editor 1935-1948)
Home Town
Ambhattā *qasbah* in district Saharanpur
Education
unknown
Background
Shaikh and son of M. Mansur Ansari
Career
Ghazī oversaw *Madīnah* for thirteen years.

Appendix VII: Advertisements published by Madīnah Newspaper

Advertisement 1: Ghazī Anwar Pasha, spokesperson for Calpack hat suppliers[8]



[8] "*jang* [War]," *Madīnah*, 15 and 22 December, 1914.

Advertisement 2: Jewelry Styles, September 1918[9]



[9] "*zeiwarāt* [jewelry]," *Madīnah*, 13 September 1918.

Advertisement 2: Advertisement for wristwatches, December 1919



Advertisement 3: Islamic Books[10]



[10] "*moqadas mutabarrak*," *Madīnah*, 17 May 1921.

Appendix VIII: Maps Printed by *Madīnah* Newspaper, 1912-1924

Map I: Map of Europe, Printed 22 August 1914.[11]



[11] *"naqsha-yi yarap* [map of Europe]," *Madīnah*, 22 August 1914.

Map II: Map of Serbia, December 1915[12]



[12] "*sarvīyā kā maidān-i jang* [Serbia's Battlefield]," *Madīnah*, 1 December 1915.

Map III: Map of World War I hostilities near the Baltic Sea, printed in *Madīnah*[13]



[13] "*naqsha-yi jang,* [map of war]," *Madīnah*, 8 October 1915.

Appendix XI: Selection of news commentary using telegrams in *Madīnah*, 1912-1924


تازہ بتازہ نو بہ نو

اطالوی لن ترانیاں (آج کا تار) باوجود یکہ کئی قسم کے اطالوی حکم
اخراج سے مستثنےٰ رکھے گئے ہیں۔ جو اطالوی اس حکم کے مطابق سلطنت عثمانیہ
سے خارج کیے جائیں گے اُن کی تعداد کم از کم سولہ ہزار ہوگی۔ ان مخرجین
کی امداد کے لئے اٹلی میں فنڈ کھولا گیا ہے جس کے لئے سب سے اوّل شاہ اٹلی نے
ساٹھ ہزار روپیہ چندہ دیا ہے۔ اس فنڈ کا منتظم گوٹی وزیر اعظم ہوگا۔

22 May, 1912[14]

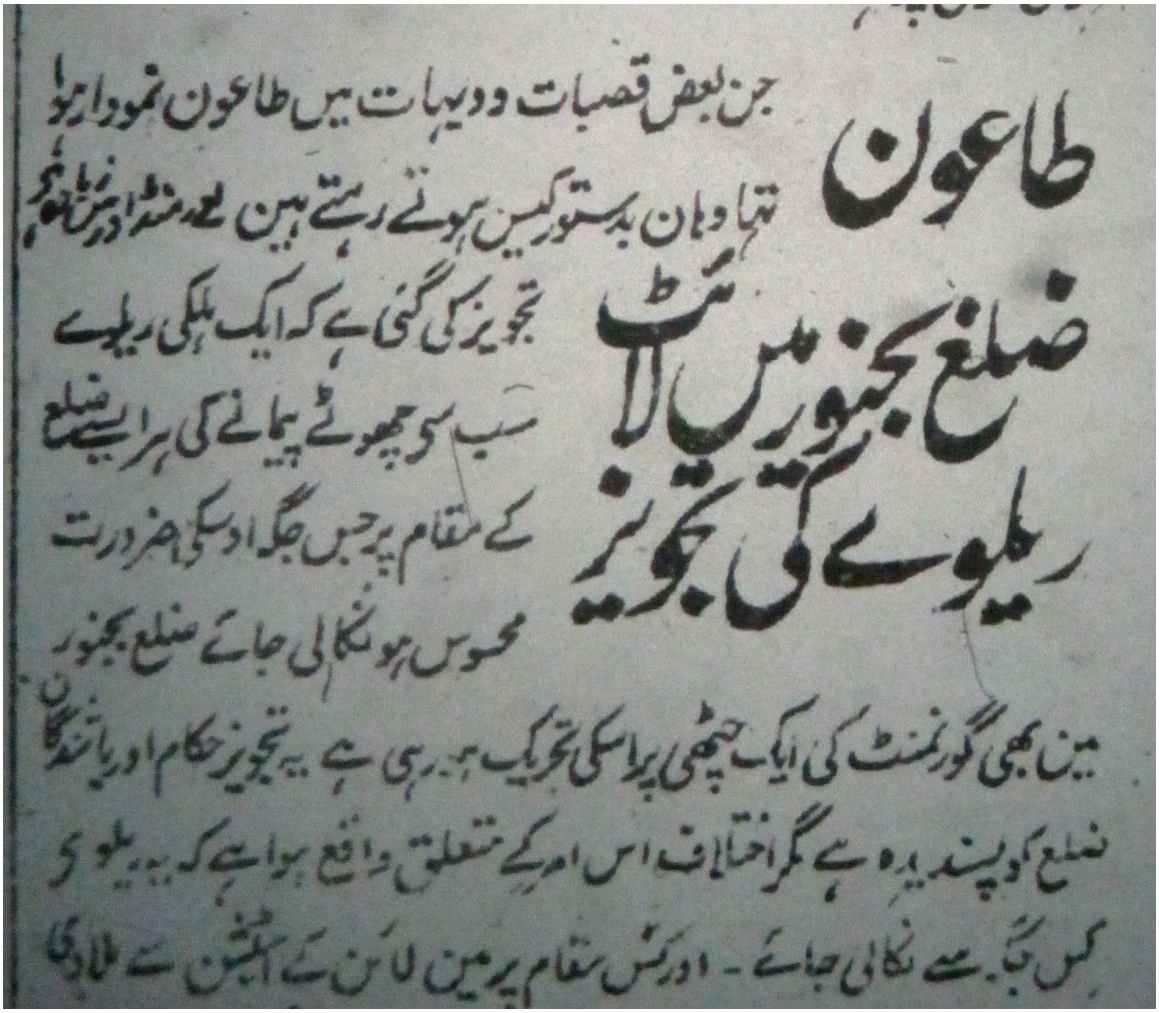
iṯālvī lan-tarānīyāN (āj kā tār) bāvajūd yikhih kisī qism ke Iṯālvī hukm ikhrāj se mustaṣne rakhe gaye haiN. jo iṯālvī is hukm ke mutābiq sultanat-i uṣmānīyah se khārij kiye jāyeinge un ke ta'adād kam-āz-kam solah hazār hogī. un … ke līye iṭalī mein fanḍ kholā gayā hai jis ke līye sab se avval shah-i iṭalī ne sāṭh hazār rupīyah chandah dīyā hai. is fanḍ kā munaẓam goṭī vazīr-i 'āzam hogā.

Despite Italian boasts (today, by telegram), there has been some sort of order related to the exclusion of Italy has been announced. The Sultan of the Ottomans will expel those Italians referred to by this order, who number at least sixteen thousand. In order to give assistance to those, Italy has opened up a fund, for which the king of Italy has given a seventy-thousand-rupee donation. The treasurer of the fund will be the prime minister.

[14] "*tāzah bi-tāzah-yi nū bi-nū* [The up-to-date of the very latest]," *Madīnah*, 22 May 1912.

Appendix XII: Excerpts from *Madīnah*

Excerpt 1: 1 May 1912, p. 13, A call for a railway in Bijnor[15]



طاعون

ضلع بجنور میں لائٹ ریلوے کی تجویز

جن بعض قصبات و دیہات میں طاعون نمودار ہوا تھا وہاں بدستور کیس ہوتے رہتے ہیں

تجویز کی گئی ہے کہ ایک ہلکی ریلوے سب سے چھوٹے پیمانے کی ہر ایسے ضلع کے مقام پر جس جگہ اوسکی ضرورت محسوس ہو نکالی جائے ضلع بجنور

میں بھی گورنمنٹ کی ایک چٹھی پر اسکی تحریک ہو رہی ہے یہ تجویز حکام اور باشندگان ضلع کو پسندیدہ ہے مگر اختلاف اس امر کے متعلق واقع ہوا ہے کہ یہ ریلوے کس جگہ سے نکالی جائے۔ اور کس مقام پر مین لائن کے اسٹیشن سے ملادی

[15] "*tā'ūn-i zilah bijnor meiN la'iṭ railwe kī tajvīz* [the proposal for a light railway in the town and District Bijnor], *Madīnah*. 1 May 1913.

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