2: The Musaddas

2:1 The form of the Musaddas

Its formal organization must be a prime consideration in examining any poem produced within a tradition which takes form as seriously as did the highly sophisticated world of Persian and Urdu literary culture in India. Most discussions of that literary culture (e.g. Russell and Islam 1969; Pritchett 1994) tend naturally enough to focus upon the ghazal, the short monohymned lyric whose central theme is love and which is generally considered to have been supremely treated in Urdu by Mir Taqi Mir (c.1722-1810) and Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797-1869). The enduring popularity of the semi-private ghazal—which was indeed the most intensively cultivated of all the traditional poetic forms—has long cast something of a critical shadow over the recognized forms of poetry of less ambiguously public content. These longer forms notably included the qastila (Shackle 1996a), a monohymned genre which had been the sole vehicle for classical Arabic poetry but which had come to be particularly associated in Persian with panegyric, whether dedicated to the Prophet (nast'ī) or to the Imams (manqabāt), or else to a royal or aristocratic patron (madīnī), the recognized master of the genre in Urdu being Mirza Muhammad Rafi Sauda (1722-80). A more widely cultivated form was the technically less exacting maznavī, the preferred genre of some of the greatest masters of classical Persian poetry, whose formal structure of rhyming couplets imposed no innate restrictions upon length, and whose use was sanctioned by ample precedent for so wide a range of themes—the personal, the romance, secular history or religious instruction and hagiography—that it would be hard, at least outside the romance, to list masters of the form in Urdu.

Although itself conspicuously public in intent, Hali's poem also presents itself as a conscious break with Urdu poetic tradition. Neither a qastila nor a maznavī—although it certainly arrogates to itself territory traditionally covered by both genres—the Musaddas-e Hali is named for its form, the musaddas stanza of six half-verses. Discussed in further detail in 2:4 below, the musaddas is one of the established if not especially frequently cultivated stanzaic forms of Persian poetry. In Urdu, the musaddas had come to be particularly associated with the Shia mazghā, the distinctively Indian type of strophic elegy lamenting the epic suffering of Imam Husain and his companions at the battle of Kerbelā (Sadiq 1984: 145-63). Composed primarily to excite feelings of pathos among the faithful through recitation at the Shia mourning ceremonies which reach their peak during the anniversary of Kerbelā in Maharram, the Urdu mazghā was intensively cultivated in Lucknow, capital of the Shia kingdom of Ayshāfūh until 1856. The greatest masters of the genre, Mir Babar Ali Anis (1802-74) and Mirza Salamat Ali Dabir (1803-75), fully exploit all the elaborately developed resources of traditional Perso-Urdu rhetoric in their creation over many decades of public poems on the grandest scale, formally consisting of a long set of musaddas stanzas, typically initiated by a single quatrain (nubah) which sets the tone for what follows.

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It is precisely this formal sequence of the mazghā which is followed in Hali's Musaddas, which is itself thereby clearly signalled to be a poem cast in a predominantly elegiac mode. This tone is also indicated in a less traditional way by its title Madd-e jazz-e islam 'The Flow and Ebb of Islam', an uncompromisingly modern heading whose plainness makes no concessions to formerly expected elegances of rhyme or chronogrammatic equivalence. Nor is this title the only plain thing about the initial format of Hali's Musaddas.

In terms of its content, the First Edition of 1879 (AH 1296) is indeed both a grand elegy and a stirring poetic call. In terms of its physical appearance, however, it is markedly dissimilar to the dense format—that derives from traditional manuscript practices of making maximum use of paper, which is common in lithographed books of Urdu poetry of the period. In place of their central columns of text which then exuberantly radiates around the margins to fill all available space, the small pages of the First Edition—as illustrated here in the specimen reproduced overhead on p. 10—lay out Hali's musaddas stanzas in neatly ruled boxes with uniform amounts of space around them, besides having subject headings carefully indicated vertically in the outer margins and numbered footnotes relegated to well-disciplined boxes below. The small size and sparseness of the layout—in whose design Hali would certainly have been closely involved—are less suggestive of those common in contemporary printed books of poetry than those typical of works of popular devotion. But it really resembles nothing so much as an Urdu textbook in the new Victorian style—unassuming, disciplined, and prosy.

This contrast between a poetic format powerfully suggesting a rather long established genre designed to move its audience to public tears and a physical format modestly suggesting the utilitarian functions of an educational text of a kind only recently introduced into the vernacular languages of India is but one of many tensions to be explored here, as revealed by careful reading of this only superficially self-assured poem.

Nor is Hali's Musaddas just a poem, or even just a poem with footnotes. Fewer than ten of the 84 pages of the First Edition are devoted to a lengthy prose introduction. This First Introduction is quite unlike the conventional introductions sometimes found in—though generally absent from—books of Urdu poetry of the period, which even at this date were as likely as not to be written in Persian. In contrast to their easily skipped grandiloquent eulogies—although not without mock-reference to their style in its sustained use of an elaborately patterned phraseology interspersed with choice verses—Hali's First Introduction is a powerfully composed mixture of autobiography and poetic manifesto. For an understanding of the genesis and overall purpose of the Musaddas as a whole, it is quite as necessary to read this Introduction as it is to use Hali's footnotes in order to understanding some of the references so painstakingly worked in to his verses from his wide reading both of traditional Islamic texts and of contemporary historical and scientific literature. Of course, both footnotes and Introduction are subsidiary to the poem, but their relative importance is some-
thing quite new in Urdu literature, where all poems before its appearance and most of those written since have been entirely self-standing in a way that the Musaddas just is not, quite, and—from today’s much later perspective—perhaps did not entirely seek to be.

At the time, however, the Musaddas was an immense success, as Hali indicated seven years later in the briefer Second Introduction prefixed to the revised version issued as the Second Edition of 1886. This act of revision itself differentiates the Musaddas from most Urdu poetry of its own or—indeed—all other periods, which, once transferred to the printed page from the carefully amended private copybook that serves as an aide-memoire to recitation, tends to be left as it is by the poet, though it is all too liable to alteration as a consequence of the notorious carelessness of many South Asian publishers. The Second Introduction indicates the scale of the changes made to the text of the First Edition. Besides a reduction of the original 297 stanzas to 294, these included many revisions of the original wording, some of which are rather significant. Anxious as to whether his criticisms of the Indian Muslims had not been too negatively expressed, Hali’s major revision to his original text was to add a Supplement (zamīna) over half as long again as the original poem. Consisting of 162 verses in the same format and metre as the original, this strives to maintain a more upbeat note. A final modification was to clear the poem’s pages of all their footnotes. Much of their substance was transferred to an alphabetically arranged Glossary (farhang) at the end of the book, which also included newly provided definitions of words which had been found difficult by readers, besides additional elucidatory material and definitions needed for the new Supplement.

Some years later—as is certainly attested for an edition of 1902—Hali added another poem to the Musaddas, echoing many of its themes but formally quite distinct from it. This is a qasida of 63 monorhymed verses headed ‘Arz-e hāl ‘Petition’, which calls upon the Prophet Muhammad to attend to the state of his community. Subsequent printings of the Musaddas normally include this Petition after the Supplement and immediately before the Glossary, which is itself now something of a canonical item apparently little susceptible to any subsequent editorial initiative.

It may be noted that the net effect of these changes to the First Edition, stemming from Hali’s characteristic tendency towards having second thoughts, has been to diminish something of its challenging modernity by shifting the Musaddas back towards more comfortably familiar poetic territory. While modern editions often keep to the same sort of small format as those of Hali’s time, this is now less suggestive of an up-to-date textbook than of a revered literary-cum-devotional text, which within the frame of the prose Introductions and the Glossary is now seen largely to consist of a very long poem—though its 456 stanzas are not normally numbered—plus a final invocation to the Prophet in the antique format of a qasida which is nowadays largely reserved for conventional religious poetry.
Our text in this book is a compromise version, drawing upon both First and Second Editions. It begins with the First and Second Introductions, with Urdu prose text faced by English translation. For the poem itself, we give the standard Urdu text of the Second Edition, but omit the Supplement which has always been rightly regarded as a somewhat pale postscript to it, and the Petition which is a still less organic addition thereto. The facing English prose translation includes versions of Hait's marginal subject headings to the sections of the poem, which have been omitted for typographical reasons from the reproduction of the Urdu text. It is also accompanied by translations of Hait's footnotes to the First Edition, which are of greater utility in this form to readers approaching the poem through English than alphabetical end notes would be. The full text of the First Edition may be reconstructed through an appendix which provides a list with commentary of both original and revised versions of all changes made by Hait between the two Editions.

The summary following in 2:2 describes the contents of the First Introduction and the standard text of the poem itself (M1-M294). The next section 2:3 describes the contents of the Second Introduction, of the Supplement (S1-S162) and of the Petition (P). It should be noted that neither the Supplement—for the reasons already stated in our preface—nor the Petition thereafter receives further systematic attention in our introduction or elsewhere in this volume.

2:2 The contents of the First Edition

The First Introduction begins with a verse repudiating Hait's past as a poet in the traditional style:

I sing no longer with the nightingale,  
From poets and reciters now I quail...

This theme is developed at length, with a wealth of imagery to underline the false exaggerations of which he self-loathingly proclaims himself to have been guilty from youth to middle age. He awakens to the sight of reality stretching around him, but finds that his twenty years of mechanical poetic exercises have left him incapable of embarking upon its broad plain, until he sees an exhausted band of travellers stumbling towards a distant goal, whose leader is described as follows:

That man of noble resolution who was guide to them all still strode along, fresh and careless of the exhaustion of the journey or the loss of his companions, and untroubled by the distance of his goal. So powerful was the magic in his glance that whoever he looked at would close his eyes and

Finally, he warns his readers that many of them will be put off by the poem's dry plainness, since it lacks poetic artifice and 'contains only historical material or translations of Quranic verses or of Hadith, or an absolutely exact picture of the present state of the community.' But he asks that they should at least listen to its message.

In the traditional style of a marziya, the beginning of the Musaddas proper is now poetically signalled by a rubai which successively conveys the essence of its theme, central image, and mood:

Pasti kā koñ' had se guznā dekhe  
Isīm kā gir-kar na uharā dekhe  
Māne na kabhī kā mad hī har juzr ke ba'd  
Daryā kā kamāre jo utarnā dekhe\(^1\)

1 If anyone sees the way our downfall passes all bounds, the way that Islam, once fallen, does not rise again, / He will never believe that the tide flows after every ebb, once he sees the way our sea has gone out.
The short prologue (M1-M7) then cites Hippocrates' pronouncement that a patient's denial of his illness is the only complete impediment to recovery and applies this judgement to the Muslims. They are described as a people asleep in a boat on the verge of shipwreck, whose obliviousness contrasts shamefully with their religion. This leads to a description of the transforming power of true Islam, through a contrasting account of the pre-Islamic period of the Jahiliyya (M8-20). Arabia was then a cut-off area which was blighted by its lack of resources and culture, with inhabitants worshipping different gods, engaged in ferocious tribal wars, and practising such barbarities as female infanticide.

Eventually God is roused to send to the Arabs his Messenger Muhammad (M21-M26), who is praised in verses subsequently made very familiar through their adoption as a lyric for devotional singing (M23):

Vo nabyon men rahat laqab pāne välā
Muradon gharibon kā bar lāne välā
Musbat men gharōn ke kām âne välā
Vo apne parâ’t kā ghan khāne válā
Faqirōn kā mālā za’fōn kā māvā
Yaθmon kā vālī ghuslāmōn kā māułā4

This abstract tone is continued throughout the passage devoted to the Prophet's mission (M27-M54), which includes many verses indicated in Hali's notes as versifications of Hadith, naturally selected to reinforce Sir Sayyid's reformist interpretation of Islam. Thus the Hadith Man ỉala la 'dunyā halalān islā'ī fiğār "ani 'ī-mus'ālati wa-ta’ayān 'āta aθīhī wa-i'ta'ī atūsan' allā jārihī laŷāī 'llāhī ta’āla yauma 'ī-qiyāmātī wa waθūjūthī miθlā qamārī lāllāi 'ī-bādī 'He who seeks legitimate livelihood for himself and for the support of his family, to act properly towards his neighbour and to escape questioning, will come before Almighty God on the day of resurrection with a face shining like the moon on the night of its fullness' is paraphrased as (M48):

Gharibon ko mihnāt kā raghbat dūlā’ī
Kī bāzū se apne karo tum kamā’t
Khābar tā kī lo islā se apnī parā’t
Na karnī pare tum ko dar dar gadā’t
Talāb se hai dūryā kā gar yān ye nīyāt
To chamkoge vān māth-ē kāmīl kī surā2

The moral impetus provided by the Prophetic mission inspires the simple, just and egalitarian society of the early Caliphate (M55-M61). This is starkly contrasted with the darkness which had then befallen former civilizations (M51-M68), until the spread of Islam through the Arabs led not only to moral renewal but to cultural renaissance, with the Arabs' tireless explorations and physical transformations of all parts of the known world from Gibraltar to Malaya—as may be still seen from the monuments of that glorious period (M69-M81). The footnotes needed to explain the wealth of geographical and other references become still denser as Hali's memorial to the golden age of Islam flows to its high water mark, first with a passage on the Umayyad Caliphate of Muslim Spain (M82-M84), whose once flourishing Arab culture is movingly evoked for an Indian Muslim reader (M82):

Huā Andalus un se gultār yakṣar
Jahān un ke āgār bāqī hālāt akgār
Jo chāhe ko’i dekh le aj jā-kar
Ye hai Bait-e Hamād kī gōyā zabān par
Kī the Ŭl-e ‘Ādān se mere bānt
‘Arab ki hūn māthī is zamān par nishān4

This is followed by a more detailed evocation of the achievements of the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad (M85-M104), which led the world in sciences and arts—including astronomy, geography, history, literature and medicine—and thereby gave mankind cause to be eternally indebted to the Arabs.

The Muslims' loss of power along with their falling away from the true practice of Islam is described in a transitional passage (M105-M114), which is closely comparable in function to the gūz-gūh which links the two main parts of a formal qasīdā. The relative status of Muslim decadence in the world is first described through an extended simile comparing it to a ruined garden, before reverting to the sea imagery which runs through the poem (M113):

Vo din-e Hijāzī kā be-bāk bēga
Niθān jis kā aqā-e ‘ālām men paθunčā
Musehīm huā ko’t khātra na jis kā
Na ‘Umman men thīkā na Qulūm men thīkā
Kī’e pāi sipār jis ne sāθōn samandaθ
Vo dābā daθhāne men Gangā ke ā-kar3

1 Through them Spain was entirely turned into a rose-garden, where many of their tombs remain. Anyone who wishes may go and see them for himself today. It is as if these words were on the tongue of the Allamān, / My founders were of the Umayyad clan. I am the token of the Arabs in this land."

1 That fearless fleet of the religion of the Hijāz, whose mark reached the extreme limits of the world, / Which no apprehension could obstruct, which did not hesitate in the Persian Gulf, or falter in the Red Sea, / Which traversed the seven seas—sink when it came to mouth of the Ganges.
With this abrupt bump, the poem moves from proud past to ignoble present. The poet addresses his community, the Muslims of the late nineteenth century (M115-M130), first reminding them of the imperial might they once exercised, then drawing attention to the state of dishonourably idle powerlessness into which they are now plunged. This state is contrasted first with that of the Europeans, whose efficiency has won them world domination (M131-M133), then with that of the Hindus, whose community spirit and readiness to adapt has won them deserved prosperity (M134-M137).

Unlike both these, the Muslims have been reduced to wretchedness by their general poverty (M138-M153), the proverbial 'mother of crimes' which has utterly subverted the values of the former elite and thus deprived the community of its natural leadership. The decline of the once mighty Muslim aristocracy is lamented (M147):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Moğar mîch chukâ jîn kà nâm-o nîshàn hai} \\
\text{Parûnî hu'î jîn kà ab dâstân hai} \\
\text{Fasânînî men gisçon men jîn kà bayân hai} \\
\text{Bahut nasî par tang un kà jahân hai} \\
\text{Nahiî un kà gadr aur pursîsh kahîn ab} \\
\text{Unhei bhîk tak ko'î détâ nahiî ab}^{6}
\end{align*}
\]

Observing that one escape from poverty is the ignoble path of becoming a hanger-on of the rich (M154-M155), Hali is led to express strong criticism of the rich for their arrogance, selfishness and complete disregard for the sufferings of the less fortunate (M156-M169). Paraphrases of Hadîth point to the principles of philanthropy enjoined by true Islam, but now practised by the peoples of the West for the betterment of their fellows. This practical civic spirit is quite unlike the habit of even those wealthy Muslims who do have some conscience, which is to waste money on traditional religious ceremonies (M170-M178).

The state of contemporary religious institutions and their leaders is next characterized in highly sardonic terms (M179-M195). Just as the clerics are criticized for their lack of learning, so too are the members of Sufi families for their lack of true learning. In the twentieth century, Iqbal was to reiterate—notably in Pañjîb ke pirzâdôn se (Matthews 1993:124-5)—such unfavourable contrasts of the Pir's of the present with the saints of old as those expressed here by Hali (M185):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Bahut log pîrîn kà aûdâ ban-kar} \\
\text{Nahiî gît-e wîlîn men kuchh jîn ke jauhîr} \\
\text{Barî jâkhîr hai jîn ko le de-ke is par} \\
\text{Kî în ke asîfl mañgîl-e dâvar} \\
\text{Kirîhîn bain jà jâ-ke jîrîhîe dîkhte}
\end{align*}
\]

The theologians are then fiercely attacked for their narrow and intolerant interpretation of Islam, in flagrant contradiction of the Prophet's own statement that 'Religion is easy' (al-dînusrûn). The readiness of the theologians to label their opponents unbelievers inspires harsh words from Hali on the general prevalence of bigotry and intolerance which has inspired such bitter sectarian divisions amongst the Muslims of India, in complete contrast to the reconciliation of so many diverse peoples once effected by Islam (M196-M213).

Hali's attack is now widened to cover the community's more general moral defects (M214-M225). Its formal profession of Islam is shown to be utterly belied by the practice of such vices as slander, envy, maliciousness, battery, and the like. A particularly common target of Hali's moral and aesthetic disapproval, what he calls 'lies and exaggeration' (kâh-o mubâlagha), is duty satirized here (M224):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Râfîyât par hâshiya ik chátîhâ} \\
\text{Qasam jînette va'don pîn sau bîr khâhâ} \\
\text{Ağar madh karîn to had se ba byłyhâ} \\
\text{Mañîlît pîn anâ to tûfân ufhîhâ} \\
\text{Ye hai rozmîrre kà yân un ke 'unîn} \\
\text{Fasânînî men be-mîsî bain jo musalhâ}^{6}
\end{align*}
\]

Final point is given to this hostile picture of the community's general wickedness by a reminder of the universal justice which prevailed under the Caliphs (M226-M230).

The last spurt of Hali's torrent of criticisms is directed against the cultural bankruptcy associated with the community's moral turpitude. The Muslims' blind traditionalism which obstinately turns its back upon contemporary knowledge in favour of the ancient 'wisdom of the Greeks' is satirically compared to the efforts of some monkeys to warm themselves before a fire which they had mistaken for fire (M231-M245). Traditional medicine is cited as a particularly glaring instance of this refusal to get up to date (M246-M248). Perhaps the most vitriolic passage in the entire Musaddas is then inspired by the perceived degeneracy of contemporary Urdu poetry (M249-M256)—that same world from which Hali charts his painful emergence at the start of the First Introduction. The consequences of the modern Muslim poets' betrayal of the proud moral heritage of Arabic poetry are savagely described (M249):

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6 But those whose name and mark is now effaced, whose tale has grown old; / Who are told of in fables and stories, their descendants' resources in the world are very strained; / They are nowhere valued or asked after now. None gives them so much as alms now.
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Vo shi'-o qaṣā'īd kā nā-pāk daftar
'Ufīnat men sandās se jo hai badar
Zārīn jīs se hai zāzāle men barābar
Malak jīs se sharmātē haiṁ āsmān pur
Huā 'ilm-o-dīn jīs se tārīdā sārā
Vo 'ilmon men 'ilm-e adab haiṁ hamārā

An extended picture of the degeneracy of the younger generation of the aristocracy follows (M257-M274), satirically characterizing its members as wastrels and scoundrels.

The start of the prologue is then recalled with a final evocation of the symbol of the boat on the point of sinking. This leads to the report of how a wise man once pronounced that a man without wisdom, knowledge or wealth is better dead. Like the opening anecdote about Hippocrates, this is told in two verses, and is followed by the poet's appeal to his community to reform itself (M275-M281). The blessings of British rule are then evoked in a passage very much of its time (M282-M289). The loyalist tone is well caught by its opening verse (M282):

Hukāmat ne azādīyān tum ko dī hain
Tarāqāt kā rāhēn sarāsar khudī hain
Saddēn ye har sīnī se ā raḥī hain
Ki rājā se parā jālak sab sukhē hain
Tāsālāt hai mālān kā amn-o-amān kā
Nahīn band āsāt kā kāīrān kā

A brief but powerful epilogue (M290-M294) emphasizes the inevitable passing of all worldly greatness into failure and decline, for God alone is free from death.

2:3 The additional contents of the Second Edition

Written some seven years later, Hali's Second Introduction first describes how, in spite of its novelty and outspokenness, the Musaddas immediately provoked an extraordinarily enthusiastic reception. Hali takes this as an indication that the Muslim community is at last on the move. The last part of the original Musaddas consequently seems too gloomy to encourage the further positive developments in the community's change of attitude:

The community itself may be unchanged, but its attitude is changing. So even if the time for praise is not yet come, disapprobation ought certainly to be diminished. Such thoughts have been strengthened by the inspiration provided by some friends, and a Supplement suitable to the requirements of the present situation has been added at the end of the original Musaddas. It was not the author's intention to make the Supplement a lengthy one, but once having embarked upon the subject, it proved to be as difficult to avoid dwelling upon it at length as it is to refrain from flailing about with arms and legs after jumping into the sea.

Slight modifications have also been made to the old Musaddas. Having become familiar with the old phrasing, readers may dislike some of these changes, but it was the author's duty not to offer the friends he had invited anything disagreeable to his own taste.

As these introductory remarks indicate, the Supplement (S) is a lengthy exercise in giving a more positive gloss to the criticisms earlier voiced so fiercely. Predictably enough, perhaps, its effect is conspicuously weaker than that of the original Musaddas, and it was therefore decided to confine our presentation and discussion of the Supplement in this book to the summary which forms the subject of this section. Some idea of its relative artistic weaknesses may be gained from the representative verses quoted as illustrations below.

Hali begins with an invocation to Hope (S1-S10), which quickly introduces a list of the Prophets. This use of a very familiar topoi of traditional Persian and Urdu poetry already provides an indication that the Supplement is going to be less uncomfortable reading than the deliberately challenging first Musaddas (S2):

Safīna pa-e Nīāh āfsān men ū thi
Sukān-bakhsūsh-e Ya'qūb Kīn'ān men ū thi
Zulākhā ki gham-ōghwarz hūrān men ū thi
Dīl-ārām Yūsuf kā zindān men ū thi
Masā'īb ne jāb ān-kār un ko ghārā
Sahārā vān sab ko ēk terā

9 The filthy archive of poetry and edes, more foul than a cesspool in its putridity. / By which the earth is convulsed as if by an earthquake, and which makes the angels blush in heaven, / Such is the place among other branches of learning of our literature, by which learning and faith are quite devastated.

10 The government has given you all kinds of freedom. It has completely opened up the roads to progress. / From every direction these cries are coming, "From prince to peasant, all men prosper." / Peace and security hold sway in all the lands. No canavan has its way blocked.

11 You were the ark for Noah in the Flood, the one who gave ease to Jacob in Canaan, / Who gave sympathy to Zulakha in her separation, who eased the heart of Joseph in prison. / When they were beset by troubles, you were the only support for all of them.
Many other achievements of Hope are then listed, with Hali's encyclopaedic enthusiasm for all things Western leading him to range as far as including its motivation of Columbus to discover the New World (S6):

Navąța bahut be-nava'don ko tā ne
Tavangar bandyā gadā'on ko tā ne
Dīyā dast-ras nā-rasā'on ko tā ne
Kāyā bādshah nakhuda'don ko tā ne
Sikandar ko shān-e Ka'ī tā ne bahār
Kulambas ko duniyā na'ti tā ne bahārī ā12

Even amongst the Indian Muslims, who have lost almost everything, there are still some grounds for hope (S11-S37). Even in their ruin, they maintain a certain spirit and style (S11):

Nahīn qaum men garchi kuchh jān bāgī
Na us meh vo islam kī shān bāgī
c
Par is hāl men bhi hai ik ān bāgī
c
Bahār kā go ur ke vaqī a gaya hai
Magar is bahārī men bhi ik ādā hai ā3

The community is compared to a sick youth with some energy in spite of illness, or to a lamp that still burns, however flickering. Every society contains good as well as bad people, and even among the Muslims of India there are some who dimly glimpse that all is not well, and heed the message of those leaders who try to draw the community's attention to what needs to be done (S20):

Ye sach hai ki hain beshtār ham men nādān
Nahīn jin ke dard-e ta'āsūb kā dārmān
Jahān men hain jo ur ki 'izāez kā khwāhān
Unhi nī se vo rahe hain dast-gīrebān
Pai ase bhi kuchh hote jāte hain pālādā
Ki jo khair-khwāhān pai hain apne shahādā ā4

It is their pride in the achievements of their ancestors which is one of the main factors helping to arouse some awareness of their present plight among the

12 You have favoured many who were destitute, and made beggars wealthy. / You have given power to those who were incapable, and made ships' captains kings. / You granted the glory of the rulers of Iran to Alexander, and on Columbus you bestowed the New World.

13 Although there is no life left in the community, nor that glory of Islam. / Nor that equipment of majesty and pomp, but even in this state there is left a certain spirit. / Although the time of their ruin has come, yet even in this ruin there is a certain style.

14 It is true that most among us are ignorant, suffering from a bigotry for which there is no cure. / Those who desire their honour in the world are continually the subject of their attacks. / But there are also some being produced who are devoted to their well-wishers.

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Indian Muslims. It is indeed this sense of self-awareness which offers the best guarantee that they may be rescued from their ruined state. The nautical image which underpins the Musaddas is here reintroduced to somewhat strained effect (S37):

Agar bā-ka'har hain ḥaqqat se aṃnī
c
Talāf lā hu'ī aqī 'azmat se aṃnī
c
Buland-o pastā ki niśbā se aṃnī
c
Gazāshī aūr aūndā hālāt se aṃnī
c
To samjho ki hai pār kheva hamārā
c
Nahīn dār manjīhār se kuchh kīnārā ā5

The point is then expanded in one of Hali's constructed dialogues (S38-S46), in which the Seljuk emperor Tughril Beg (d. 1063) asks his nephew and successor Alp Arslan which peoples which peoples are the best and most successful, and is told that it is those who are most self-aware.

A considerable part of the Supplement is next devoted to the expansion of a theme which has already been given some prominence in the Musaddas—the need for the community to exert itself through effort and hard work (kōshīūr-o miṅnar). The virtues of toil are first extolled in a general fashion (S47-S55), in a passage which points out how all human achievements are due to hard work. The theme of the playgrounds of the rich being constructed by the toil of the poor—which was to be much exploited half a century later in the Urdu Progressive poetry of the 1930s—is here foreshadowed by Hali (S52):

Gulīstān mer jōban gal-o yārman kā
c
Samān zulf-e sumbul kā tāb-o shikān kā
c
Qād-e dūl-rūhī sarv aur nāvān kā
c
Rukh-e jān-fa'zā lāla-o nīzarān kā
c
Ghantōn kī miṅnar kā hai rang-o bā sab
c
Kamerōn kī kūhān se hain ye iza-rlī sab ā6

There follows an extended attack in familiar vein upon the vices of the lazy (S56-S72), how they beg instead of working, how they disperse the efforts of the industrious, and how their idleness destroys the community. The positive aims of the Supplement demand that this attack be answered by praise of the industrious, which is expressed at somewhat greater length (S73-S95). Much
emphasis is laid upon the unceasing demands the industrious make of themselves in all circumstances (S77):

Mashaqat men 'umur un kā kañjī hai säri
Nahīn ārām kī un ke bārī
Sadā bhāg daur un kā rahā hai jārī
Na āndhī men 'ādz na menh men hain 'ārī
Na lī jēgh kā dam uñjī hai un kā
Na thir māgh kī jī chhugātī hai un kā17

Their toil is devoted to the support of all, as they use their God-given strengths for the common good. So it is through industry that honour accrues to any community, and through industry that political power and security, besides scientific and intellectual skills are gained (S96-S98).

Amongst the Muslims, however, there is a sad dearth of skills (S99-S104). This is conspicuously true of the young men from good families (sharif naujawañ), who are too fond of amusements to apply themselves to their studies. This hedonism prevents the proper development of their natural talents, which might otherwise guarantee the development from this class of intellects to rival such great Muslim thinkers of the past as Nasir ud Din Tusi (d. 1274) or Fakhr ud Din Razi (d. 1210) (S103):

Yēth jo ki phirē hain be-'ilm-o jāhīl
Bahut in men hain jīn ke jauhar hain qāhīl
Razīl men phirān hain in ke jāwāl
Inhīn nāqīrōn men hain pshēāda kāmil
Na hote agar māl-e lahn-o bārū
Hazardun inhīn men the Ḥādīs-o Razī18

This leads to a series of verses on the necessity of knowledge to nations who are to make anything of themselves in the world (S105-S117). The Muslims of India are exorted to exert themselves and remember the achievements of their forebears in this area (S118-122), how the Muslims of the golden age used to travel widely in search of knowledge, and how they set up colleges of higher learning all over the Islamic world. Here, as so frequently in the Supplement, a characteristic theme of the Musaddas—the association between travel and knowledge (cf. 3:5 below)—is not so much developed as simply reiterated (S121, cf. M78-M79):

The following verses deal with self-help (S123-124, headed Apni madad āp), thus reintroducing yet another key theme of the Musaddas (cf. section 3:7 below). Particular reference is here made to the absolute priority of education (S125-S135). Nothing could be worse than becoming a burden upon the state, however benevolent a regime the British Empire may be (S126):

Sārāsar ho go sālanat fa'īl-gustar
Rā'īyāt kā khud tārīhiyat men ho yāvar
Māgar ko 'īlāt nāhīn is se badar
Kī har bōjī ho gaum kā sālanat par
Ho is tārī hāthōn men us ke 'ī'īyāt
Kī quābī men ghassāl ke jāse mayār19

The state provides security and justice, and has guaranteed equal access to education, eliminating previous inequalities of the kind which once distinguished Brahmin and Shudra, or aristocrat and commoner. It is education that fosters a true community spirit, education that guarantees the political ideals of

17 Their whole life is spent in hard labour, and they get no time to rest. / Their racing onwards remains ever in progress. They are not helpless in a dust-storm, nor incapable in the rain. / The burning wind of Jumne does not make them catch their breath, nor does the frost of February make them lose heart.

18 Among these ones who wander about unlearned and ignorant are many with natural ability. / Their vices conceal their virtues. Hidden among these worthless cases are real masters. / If they were not given to sport and play, thousands among them would be like Tusi and Razi.

19 In the lands of Iraq and Syria, in Khwarazm and Turan, wherever they heard that the wares of education were cheap, / They would boldly face mountain and desert, and surmount all obstacles to arrive in eager search. / Wherever the religion of Islam was in operation, there would be queues of them on every road.

20 The Nizamīya, Nauriya, Mustansiriya, Nafisiya, Sittiyah, and Sāhibiya, / The Ravaḥiyah, Iṣāziya and Qāhiriya, the Aziziya, Zainiyyah and Nafisiyya, — / These colleges were centres for people from all over the world, for Arabs from the Hijaz, for Kurds and for Qipchaq Turks.

21 Even though the Empire is entirely benevolent, itself aiding the training of its subjects, / Yet there is no condition worse than the community becoming a complete burden upon the Empire, / And its subjects being in its hands like a corpse in the grasp of a body-washer.
Hali's Musaddas

Western liberalism (cf. 3.7 below) here denoted in characteristic style by Hali through use of the English loan words 'republic' and 'public' (S133):

Sunt hai gharrhon kī faryād ust ne
Kīyā hai ghulāmī ko bahrād ust ne
Rīpālīk kī dāli hai bunyād ust ne
Banāyā hai pālīk ko əzād ust ne
Muqayyad bht kart hai ye aur rīha bht
Banāt hai əzād bht bā-vafa bht²²

The sorry state of the Muslims is due to a lack of education (S136-S143), resulting in a general lack of skills. The consequent dearth of indigenous industry necessitates a reliance upon the imported goods and skills generated by British 'mechanics' (S140):

Agar ik pahinne ko lōpī banā'ēn
To kapgā vo ik aur dunyā se ətā'ēn
Jo sīnē ko vo ek sūtī māngā'ēn
To mashriq se maghrīb men lene ko jā'ēn
Har ik shai men ghairōn ke muhāf hain vo
Makainikī kī rau men tārāj hain vo²³

Since everything is imported, commerce too is adversely affected. Hence there is an urgent need to foster education in the community and to put the same proper value upon the acquisition of skills as the ancient Greeks did (S144-S151). These changes should usher in the hoped for revival in community spirit (S152-S158), for which the last of Hali's similes from everyday life provides an ideal example in the industriously selfless life of the ant-hill (S159):

Zakhūra hai jab chōyūtā ko'qā' pāta
To bāgā jama'at men hai apni ātā
Unhēn sāhī le le-ke hai yān se jāā
Futāh apni ek ek ko hai dūhāā
Sādā un ke haiān is taraḥ kām chaite
Kama't se ek ik kī lākhon haiān palte²⁴

22 It is education which has heard the cry of the poor, which has destroyed slavery, / Which has laid the foundation of 'republic', which has set free the 'public', / Which both confines and sets more free, which brings both freedom and faithfulness.

23 If they make a hat to wear, they bring the cloth for it from another world. / If they need a needle to sew with, they go from East to West to get it. / In everything they are dependent upon others, and are destroyed by the etsal of 'mechanics'.

24 When any ant finds a store, he comes running to his community. / And, taking them with him, goes from there to show each of them his supplies. / This is how things ever proceed amongst them: from the earnings of each individual hundreds of thousands are nourished.

The Supplement ends with a prayer to God to look after the Prophet's community before it is too late (S159-S162).

The same mode of supplication is taken up in the final addition to the Musaddas, the Petition (P) whose appeal to the Prophet to attend to his community begins (P1):

Ai khāsā-e khāsān-e rusul vaqt-e du'ā hai
Ummat pai tirī å-ke 'afāl vaqt parā hazā²⁴

Many of the themes of the Musaddas are again reiterated more briefly in the Petition, which bewails the community's loss of all but its religion. As another gloomy picture is drawn of the ruin into which the once mighty Muslims have fallen, familiar images make their appearance (P40):

Faryād hai ai kīhī-ē ummat ki nigahān
Beğī ye tabāhī ke qarīb ån lāgā hai²⁶

In keeping with this poem's devotional nature, however, the Petition suggests that the ultimate solution to the community's problems lie not so much in education and industrious self-help as in a renewal of that Islamic faith which is still so particularly expressed in passionate devotion to the Prophet (P50):

I'mān jīse kahte hain 'aqīdē meh hamārē
Vo tērī muhabbat tin 'irāt ki vīlā hain²⁷

While the community still loves the Prophet, there is still hope for it. Having enjoyed its turn of glory, it may now endure its disgrace, provided that its faith remains intact.

2.4 The style of the Musaddas

A critical reading of almost any poem will demand at least some cursory analysis of the inextricable link between its semantics and its form, of the relationship between its message and its medium. The overt message of the Musaddas, its poetic articulation of Sir Sayyid's aggressively formulated reformism, will have been sufficiently introduced through the preceding summaries. The verses already quoted in transliteration may also have conveyed some idea of the nature of its medium. But since it is by definition dependent upon both the

²⁵ O most noble of the noble messengers, it is the time for entertainy. Upon your community a strange time has come.

²⁶ The cry goes up, O guardian of the ship of the community, 'This fleet has begun its approach to destruction.'

²⁷ The faith which is said to reside in our belief is our love for you, our devotion to your family.
Hali’s Musaddas

Urdu language and the poetic conventions associated therewith, more now needs to be said about the style of the Musaddas.

As is shown by his remarks at the end of the First Introduction, Hali was fully aware of the criticisms that his consciously new style was likely to attract from connoisseurs of the classical school of Urdu poetry:

Our country’s gentlemen of taste will obviously have no liking for this dry, insipid, plain and simple poem... Flights of fancy or elegance of style are nowhere to be found in it, and it lacks both the seasoning of exaggeration and the flavouring of artifice. In other words, it contains none of the things with which the ears of my fellow countrymen are familiar and to which their taste is accustomed... This poem has not, however, been composed in order to be enjoyed or with aim of eliciting applause, but in order to make my friends and fellows feel a sense of outrage and shame. It will be a sufficient kindness on their part if they will look at it, read it, and understand it.

An extreme sensibility to language and its stylistic implications seems always to have been a strongly marked characteristic of the Urdu literary world, as the perhaps inevitable consequence of its situation in both the Persianate and Indic worlds. So it was hardly surprising that contemporary critics were indeed to be united in the view that the medium of the Musaddas was quite as revolutionary as its message. For supporters, the new style which Hali called ‘natural poetry’ (nechural shā‘īr) was an essential and exciting concomitant of the new ideology. For opponents, the ‘natural poetry’ of the Musaddas was tarred with the same brush of infidelity to tradition as Sir Sayid’s rationalist attempt to bring Islam into conformity with ‘natural law’—the heretical position for which he was widely execrated as a ‘nature-ist’ (nechari).

These conflicting contemporary reactions are vividly illustrated in the various imitations of the Musaddas discussed in section 2.5 below. To understand how its style was able to arouse such passions, it is first useful to take note of the established poetic standards against which its divergences were judged. For present purposes it is hardly necessary to go into detail about the historical evolution of these norms, whose function in the Urdu art-poetry of the mid-nineteenth century has been described elsewhere (e.g. Pritchett 1994:77-122; Shackle 1996a). From the critical perspective Hali later elaborated in his Muqaddama, which advocated the subordination of poetic structures to higher moral purposes, the trouble with contemporary Urdu poetry was that any message had become quite overlaid by layers of medium, as true art had come almost entirely to be replaced by mere artifice.

Although the contemporary taste for elaboration may be seen in the wider context of Islamic literary history as but one phase of a cycle regularly alternating over the centuries in Arabic, then Persian too, latterly also in Urdu poetry, to Hali it represented an absolute nadir, reached after a long process of steady decline from the glorious simplicities articulated in the Persian classics, or still more effectively in earlier Arabic poetry. The artificiality Hali regarded as so degenerate was associated particularly with the so-called ‘Lucknow school’ centred upon the pupils of Shaikh Imam Baksh Nasik (d. 1383), a remarkable figure who was extraordinarily influential in his day for his success in imparting to Urdu poetry all the glitter of the sixteenth century ‘Indian style’ of Persian poetry (Heinz 1973).

Like most artistic styles, this is less effectively captured through description than through brief example. A passage in a long qasida by Hali’s near contemporary Muhsin Kakoari (1827-1905), a third-generation pupil of the Nasik school, uses a characteristically elaborate rhetoric to play with contrasts between the clouds and the lightning of an Indian monsoon. In one verse, for instance, lightning and cloud appear nearly contrasted types of non-Muslims (Sperl and Shackle 1996b: no. 35, verses 6-7):

Dhur kā dilrā-bachha hai hōr lye jal men āg
Abr choq kā birahman hai lye āg men jal

In the next, cloud and lightning are even more neatly contrasted as senior officials of the British Empire:

Abr Panjāb talātam men hai a’lā nazim
Barq Bangāla-e Zumāt men gawanvar jannat

These are verses which demand a sophisticated audience, able without commentary to appreciate the subtle aptness of choq kā, both ‘supreme’ and ‘with a Brahmin’s lock’, or of talātam, whose ‘turbulence’ fits the cloud, and whose five letters in the Urdu script fit the Punjab, the Land of the Five Rivers. They also address an audience appreciating the deviance of such highly wrought art to serious purpose. Muhsin’s qasida of 1876 is an extended eulogy of the Prophet Muhammad, for any Muslim poet a theme of no less profound gravity than Hali’s Musaddas of 1879.

Hali carefully denied himself such extended transmutations of reality in his own mature poetic practice, whose later codification in the Muqaddama condemned them as morally indefensible distortions and aesthetically unacceptable rhetorical tricks. While distinguished by its continual restraint from stylistic exuberance of this kind, much of Hali’s poetry does, however, closely follow the same underlying rules. The Petition added to the Musaddas, for instance, is a quite traditional type of poem. Like Muhsin’s, it is a qasida addressed to the Prophet, albeit in supplication rather than in praise. The ‘ground’ (zamir) of Muhsin’s poem—the formal scheme of its rhyme and

26 So outstanding a fire-worshipper is the lightning that in water it carries fire, so supreme a Brahmin is the cloud that in fire it carries water.
27 The cloud is Governor in the Punjab of turbulence, the lightning is Governor-General in the Bengal of darkness.
Hali’s Musaddas

metre—is precisely based on one cultivated by Sauda, the great master of Urdu qasida, and he in turn derived it from the twelfth century Persian master Anvari’s ode beginning jinn-e khusrud chu az hût dar ‘ayad ba-hamal ‘When the disk of the sun enters Aries from Pisces.’ So too does Hali’s Petition use another metre which Sauda, in imitation of many classical Persian exemplars, particularly favoured for the qasida. This comprises successive pairs of long- and short syllables, although its symmetry is somewhat obscured by its analysis in traditional Urdu prosody (cf. Thiesen 1982) as a variety of hazafl, divided into four feet with the pattern maf‘ūlu maf‘ūlu maf‘ūlu fa‘ūlan. The scanion may be illustrated with the aid of the symbol * to indicate an unlong syllable (P23):

- - - / - - - / - - - / - - - * - - * -

‘Ishrat-kade abād* the jis qaum’ ke hār sū
- - - * - - - - - / - - - - - - - / - - - - - - - - - - -
Us qaum’ kā ek ek’ ghar ab bazm-e ‘azā hai

For all its modernist emphasis on the familiar key term qaum ‘community, people’, there is nothing very revolutionary about this neatly composed verse, with its modestly Persianized vocabulary and its entirely traditional structure, governed by the placement of a phrase at its beginning (‘Ishrat-kade ‘pleasure-places’) chiastically designed to contrast with the expression which forms the rhyme at its close (bazm-e ‘azā ‘assemblies of mourning’). The accepted poetic practice of the time might indeed be defined as a spectrum at whose most admired end lay works like Muhsin’s qasida, while Hali’s Petition represented an extreme of simplicity at its other limit.

It was the deliberate flouting of this limit in the search for still more unadorned and barren expression which made the style of the Musaddas so controversial. As is clear from the Muqaddama, much of the inspiration for this revolutionary ‘natural’ style certainly came from Hali’s understanding of English poetics, most obviously those articulated by Wordsworth (Pritchett 1994:166–7). But the Musaddas itself is chiefly concerned with staking out a new position for Urdu poetry in the literary tradition of the Islamic world. It does this in a whole variety of ways.

One of these is its prosodic form. An Urdu poem’s choice of metre was traditionally an important self-statement, one of the main methods—along with direct and indirect quotation—which served to align it with recognized Persian or Urdu masterpieces of the past. The mutagārib selected by Hali for the Musaddas is similar to that used in Persian in the great Shāhnāma (1010) by Firdausi, whose epic overtones he may have wished to suggest, although a likelier analogue would be another famous Persian poem in Firdausi’s metre by the Persian poet whom Hali admired above all others, the highly instructional

30 The pleasure-places of that community were flourishing on every side—but its every abode now houses assemblies of mourning.

28

The Musaddas

Bostân by Sadi of Shiraz (d. c.1292). The following verse illustrates the metre and style of the Bostân, whose simplicity Hali was to capture more successfully than its elegance:

- - / - - / - - / - - -

Ba-daryā marâvu gaftam-at zin‘hâr
- - / - - / - - / - - -

Vagar mibrâf tan ba-tâfân sipâr*

It was, however, not only the more direct of the Persian masters who were Hali’s models. It is significant that he ends the First Introduction with a quotation from Hafez (1326–89), which might be regarded as valedictory in more senses than one, with an ambiguity entirely appropriate to the great master of the Persian ghazal. The only identifiable quotation in the Musaddas itself is not from Persian but from Arabic, the already mentioned Hadith al-dīnu yâmun ‘Religion is easy’ (M192). The role of Arabic literature as a conscious historical model is emphasized in the First Introduction by Hali’s description of how Sir Sayyid aroused his dormant inspiration by invoking the example of Arabic poetry:

It is true that much has been written, and continues to be written about this. But no one has yet written poetry, which makes a natural appeal to all, and has been bequeathed to the Muslims as a legacy from the Arabs, for the purpose of awakening the community.

It seems likely that the metre chosen for the Musaddas was intended to reflect Hali’s general concern to direct the new poetry away from the perceived effeteness of Persianate rhetoric back towards the more virile model of Arabic. This metre is the full (acatalectic) variety of mutagārib, not at all favoured for large-scale poems in Persian or in Urdu, including the Urdu marsiyā cited in section 2.1 above as the most obvious inspiration of the strophic form of the Musaddas. It is, however, one of the few Perso-Urdu metres at all commonly used in classical Arabic poetry, at least that of the Abbasid period (cf. Arberry 1965:11). It therefore seems quite likely that its Arabic associations helped determine the choice of this somewhat unusual metre, which was in Urdu to become so closely identified with the Musaddas. This full variety of mutagārib has twelve syllables to the hemistich, with the pattern fa‘īlan fa‘īlan fa‘īlan fa‘īlan, a highly symmetric four-square rhythm entirely in keeping with the revivalist character of the Musaddas. Six hemistichs in this unvarying metre are arranged in a saadah rhyme-scheme to constitute a stanza, as illustrated in the example which follows (M3). It may be noted in passing that the rhymes of the

31 ‘Beware!’ I said, ‘Do not go into the sea. And if you do, entrust your body to the storm.’
Musaddas are quite flexible, too flexible indeed for some of the critics alluded to in the following section below. They may vary in length from a single syllable up to five syllables, as in the final -ar ahl-e kishār below. Two-syllable rhymes are the commonest, like the opening -ā hai which is exactly the same as the undemanding monorhyme of the Petition:

\[
\begin{align*}
Yāḥī hāl' dūnā men us qaum' kā hai
Bhavvar men jahāz ā-ke jīs kā ghirā hai
Kānā hāi dār āsr tēsān ho-pā hai
Gumān hāi ye har-dām kā bā dib'ā hai
Nahi'n lete karvāl magar ahl-e kishār
Page sote hāi be-khabar ahl-e kishār.
\end{align*}
\]

While this simple rhythm was certainly a factor encouraging the popular diffusion of the Musaddas and its message, its aesthetic consequences were not always entirely happy, as will be further illustrated below. The keen awareness of these weaknesses on the part of contemporary critics is well captured in the satirical definition of ‘natural poet’ offered in the Avadh Punch of 1904 (quoted in Sandilvi 1960:288) as:

One who is unsophisticated in prosody and ignorant in rhyme, rampageous as a lion in braggadocio, whom his grubby creation fills with conceit.

While this is of course wildly unfair, the unvarying beat of Hali’s mutaqārib certainly lacks the rhythmic flexibility offered by metres like mutāri which have been generally preferred by Urdu poets of all periods (cf. Matthews and Shackle 1972:212-3).

Its metre is only one possible instance of the influence of Arabic example on the Musaddas. Others are more obvious, including its highly explicit reliance on paraphrases from Arabic sacred literature, whose original texts are so carefully indicated in Hali’s notes. The overt influence of Arabic poetry is less easy to establish, although mention here might be made of the device of establishing a framework for nostalgia through the citation of exotic proper names. Deployed at finely judged intervals throughout the magnificent elegy (Arberry 1965:72-81) on the ruined Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon in Iraq by al-Buhuri (812-97), this device is rather a favourite of Hali’s, as is to be seen in his deeply felt—if rhythmically rather awkward—lament for the glories of Muslim Spain (M83):

\[
\begin{align*}
Huvāidā hāi Ghornātā se shuqāt un kā
Aynā hāi Bilanshiya se qudrat un kā
Batalbār ko yēd hāi ‘azmat un kā
Tapākā hāi Qādis men sār hasrat un kā
Nāshī hāi kā Ishbiliya men hāi soīā
Shāb-o roz hāi Qurābā un kā rokā.
\end{align*}
\]

Just as such lists of exotic names help to tilt the new Urdu poetry’s whole frame of reference away from its Persianate past, so too does Hali’s choice of vocabulary crucially define the ‘natural’ style by largely stripping it of the Persian phraseology which for many centuries suffused and defined all the poetic literatures of the Persianate tradition. This represents a quite radical break with the past, quite different from the the paths followed from the later nineteenth century onwards in Persian (Karimi-Hakkak 1996) or in Arabic poetry, where the way forward seemed typically to lie rather in re-establishing fresh links with the literary past of their own languages. Such, for instance, was the case for the so-called neo-classicist movement in Arabic (Cachia 1990:180-4) led by Hali’s contemporary al-Barudi (1839-1904), exiled by the British from Egypt to Ceylon, where much of his finest work was produced (cf. Arberry 1965:148-55). His greatest successor in the next generation too, Ahmad Shauqi (1868-1932), was able derive fresh inspiration from great masters of the Abbasid period like al-Mutanabbi (d. 965), while also elaborating new references to the Pharaonic past of his native Egypt (Boudot-Lamotte 1977).

For would-be modernist poets in composite languages like Urdu or Ottoman Turkish, the choice was not so simple. In their desire to express an ideal future, there was no comparably unambiguous distant past for them to reclaim, in compensation for their rejection of what they commonly identified as the Persianate effeteiness of immediate past and their present. There were, of course, major differences between the political situation of the disempowered Indian Muslims and the Ottomans, a Muslim elite still in control of a multilingual and multireligious empire. But the mid-nineteenth century Turkish reformers (Andrews and Kalpakli 1996) could identify neither with the highly

\[32\] Precisely this is the condition in the world of that community, whose ship has entered the whirlpool and is surrounded by it. / The shore is far away, and a storm is raging. At every moment there is the apprehension that it is just about to sink. / But the people on the boat do not even turn over, as they lie asleep and unconscious.

\[33\] Their majesty is manifest from Granada, their greatness is made apparent by Valencia, / Their glory is recalled by Badajoz, Cadiz thongs with longing for them, / Their fortune sleeps in Seville, and Cordoba weeps for them night and day.
Persianized Ottoman associated with the discredited regime nor with the simple
turkish of the uncultured Anatolian peasantry. The search undertaken by
Young Turks like Namik Kemal (1840-1888) -- another almost exact
contemporary of Halil's -- for an idiom which would one day match French (or
English) as a language of modern culture accordingly led them to exploit the
third strand of their complex linguistic heritage. This was Arabic, whose
enormous resources of abstract vocabulary were drawn upon to fill the gap left
by the now discredited rose and babul. The opening verse of the well known
'Freedom qasida' by Namik Kemal illustrates the typical consequences of this
change to a poetic environment in which subtleties of the kind presented in
Mehsit's poetry had previously dominated (Sperl and Shackleton 1996b: 20.26.1):

Görüp akhâm-i 'asz râmarif siyik u selâmetden
Çekildik 'izzet ü ikhâl ile bâb-i hâkîmeneden

The effect of the verse is entirely dependent upon its plethora of Arabic words,
which would be spelt for Urdu as akhâm-e 'asz 'laws of the age', munharif
'turned', siyik sulâmât 'honesty and decency', 'izzat-i 'iqbâl 'glory and fortune',
bâb-e hukûmat 'gate of government'.

Halil does exactly the same sort of thing in the Musaddas. Many of its
verses rely for their structure on sequences of Arabic abstract nouns ending in
-ât. A large inventory of these may be found in our glossary, which also shows
that only some of them belong to the technical vocabulary of Islam whose use
is necessitated by the poem's theme. Typically consisting of three syllables, these
nouns tend to coincide all too closely with the muqârîb rhythm, just as -- with
the addition of Turkish suffixes -- they do with the equally regular hâzâf of Namik
Kemal's poem. As an illustration, the rhythmic accents which fall on the first
long syllable of each foot are marked in the following example (M42):

Ghânîmat hai sâh hâl se 'pahâle
Fa'râghat ma'shâqil ki 'kashât se 'pahâle
Ja'ânt bîrîhâpî ki 'zâhmat se 'pahâle
Fâqâmat mu'sâfir ki 'ro'hât se 'pahâle
Fa'âqîr se 'pahâle ghanîmat hai 'daulat
Jo 'karma hai 'kar lo ki 'thôrî hai 'munîlat

Neither Namik Kemal nor Halil can have derived this sort of Arabizicing
diction from classical Arabic poetry itself, which is famously so much more
concrete in its vocabulary. Actually, the Islamicate patina which this consciously

34 The laws of the age swerved before our eyes from honesty and decency: and so turned we, and
glory turned and fortune from government's gate.
35 You have your opportunity in health before sickness, in leisure before abundant occupations,
in youth before the afflication of old age, in halting before the traveller goes on. / You have your
opportunity in health before poverty. Do what you ought, for there is little time to spare!

The neatness of such structures is entirely compatible with the extensive use of
abstract Arabic vocabulary, besides suggesting profounder analogies with the
rationalist emphases characteristic of Sir Sayyid's strategy for reform.
The profundity of these influences from Western example upon the language and structure of the Musaddas are far more important than the few English loanwords Hali chooses to flaunt, which are confined to 'nation' (M62), 'liberal' and 'liberty' (M97), 'office' (M135), and 'chemistry' (M247). Together with a few more indicated in the foregoing summary of the Supplement, e.g. 'republic' and 'public' (S133) or 'mechanics' (S140), these are interesting for the semantic fields they indicate. They do not add up to a very long list, although a more detailed investigation would certainly add a larger number of calques to it, including Arabic abstract nouns of the type already mentioned, e.g. fa'ilat 'agriculture' and sty'dhat 'travel' (both M75), besides those formed on other patterns like tamaddun 'civilization' and tarajf 'progress' (both M8), and such compound phrases as azkidr t:j'a 'freedom of opinion' (M273).

At the superficial level of vocabulary, therefore, English influences on the language and structures of the Musaddas are thus rather slight, however great their role in helping mould the new poetic rhetoric of the 'natural' style. So, in a highly typical reflection of local linguistic concerns (cf. Shackle and Snell 1990:6-11, 73), local critics have instead generally chosen to fasten on a phenomenon which might be regarded as exhibiting the reverse characteristics from those to be associated with English, namely Hali's use of 'Hindi' vocabulary. That wag in the Avadh Parch of 1904 described 'natural propaganda' as containing 'torrents of pure Hindi (vec'h hindi) and heaps of unfamiliar words' (Sandilav 1960:289).

In order to understand the feelings aroused by this issue, it is helpful once more to recall parallels with Turkey, where the linguistic shifts introduced in the nineteenth century by the Young Turks were abruptly succeeded in the 1920s—after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire—by Atatürk's policies of linguistic nationalism. These resulted in a wholesale replacement of the Persian and Arabic components of Ottoman by 'pure' (di) vocabulary of actual or fabricated Turkish or Turkish origin.

In India, where the beginnings of the later communal polarization of Urdu and Hindi were already well under way in the nineteenth century, a comparable strategy was never really feasible for those seeking to modernize Urdu by increasing the proportion of its indigenous vocabulary—here termed 'Hindi' in quotation marks to distinguish it from the Sanskritized modern standard Hindi in Devanagari script which is the national language of India. Urdu's indigenous Khari Boli base without its Perso-Arabic overlay looks less like modern Urdu than simple modern Hindi. It was, therefore, not just Hindu linguistic chauvinism which made it plausible to include a poem of Hali's in Devanagari script in an early anthology of Khari Boli Hindi verse (Bewa ki munajat in Ayodhya Prasad 1889:39-44, cf. McGregor, 1975:104-111) which was produced at a time when the emerging modern Hindi was fighting its own battles for recognition as a poetic language, only in its case against the established position of Braj Bhasha.

The controversy over the proper language for Urdu poetry was being fought in a different arena. Hali's linguistic experiments with 'Hindi' vocabulary were undertaken partly in reaction to the linguistic purism of the Nasik school, where much effort had been devoted to expunging the sorts of native words once freely employed by Sauida and his eighteenth century contemporaries, in favour of what were seen as chaster Persianisms. Since he was here venturing on long-abandoned stylistic territory, Hali's use of 'Hindi' is often rather unassured, as is indicated by the elimination of such words in many of the detailed textual revisions illustrated in the appendix to our translation. Some of those words which do remain might well be unfamiliar to many Hindi readers, let alone the Urdu public, e.g. khet 'moonrise' (M22), khélé 'confusion' (M71), kama'undhana 'indebted' (M104), go 'opportunity' (M125). Nor is such recondite vocabulary, with its strongly rustic overtones, always very happily integrated into the poem's predominantly Arabicizing diction. In the following verse, for instance, the oppressively 'Hindi' item dagera 'hard rain' blends very awkwardly with the blandly Persianate abr-e siam 'cloud of tyranny' (M65):

hydrate jhar maqaz-va hali ki
Galaµ par chhiot chaµ rahi thi jaµ ki
'Uqabat ki hau thi na purish khuaµ ki
Pahar thi rahi thi wadiat khulaµ ki
Zamhn par thar abr-e siam k'a dagera
Tubhii menh thi nau'-e insaµ k'a baµ'36

In fairness, though, it should of course be said such peculiar words constitute only a quite small proportion of Hali's 'Hindi' vocabulary. On the whole, Hali makes very successful use of this register of the language as an important tool in his strategy of reaching beyond the narrow circles of the literati in order to secure as wide an audience as possible for the 'natural poetry' addressed to the Muslim community as a whole. Everyday words are used to express many of the poem's core themes, e.g. barisha 'to progress' and barishana 'to advance', and to underpin many of the poem's core images—those deliberately simple similes, parables and metaphors whose fuller implications are explored in the third part of our introduction below. Often largely excluded in favour of their Persian equivalents from the Urdu poetic vocabulary of the day, these words include the recurring n 'ship' and beg 'fleece', besides dihan 'sink' and dbona 'drown', or ghul 'raincloud', khet 'field', and gahar 'shepherd'. There is certainly—as has been shown—much more to the poetic language of the Musaddas than such simple items, but there is no denying that its 'Hindi' component did form an important part of the poem's impact on Hali's contemporaries.

36 Everywhere there raged the wind of calamity. Throats were being cut by the knife of cruelty. / There was no limit to torture, nor investigation into wrongdoing. God's trust lay being plundered. / The 'hard rain' of the cloud of tyranny pelited upon the earth. The fleet of mankind lay wrecked.