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ĀZĀD, MUHAMMAD HUSAYN (1830-1910), Urdu writer, was a leading exponent of "new" Urdu prose, and a pioneer of the reaction against the Persian tradition in Urdu poetry, with its emphasis on *ghazal* and its preoccupation with ornate, stylised language.

Born in Dihli, he was the son of one of the first leading journalists of north India. He was educated at Delhi College, and acquired a mastery of both Arabic and Persian. By 1854, he was editor of his father's newspaper, the *Dihlī Urdū Akhbār*. A love of poetry was fostered in him by the poet *Dhawḳ* (1789-1854), who was a friend of his father's. However, the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and its aftermath completely changed his life, and its effect probably never left him. His father was executed for treason by the British authorities, and he himself fled and became a wanderer. In 1864 he arrived in Lahore, where he was to reside for the remainder of his life. He obtained a minor post in the Panjab Ministry of Public Instruction. He twice visited Persia, and in 1865 he accompanied an Indian Government secret mission to Bukhārā, aimed at investigating Russian penetration of that region.

In his early years in Lahore, he quickly won the confidence of local British dignitaries, including Colonel Holroyd, Director of Public Instruction. He wrote several educational works, including a Persian course in two books, and, in Urdu, Volume ii of *Kiṣāṣ-i-Hind*, a three-volume series of Indian historical stories. Though designed for students, the latter book won the admiration of more mature readers, for its vivid style. In 1865 Dr. G. W. Leitner, Principal of Government College, founded the *Andāmān-i Pandjāb*, a literary society, and Āzād was appointed secretary in 1867. One project of the Society was to encourage the reform of Urdu poetry, and Āzād threw himself wholeheartedly into this. For nearly a year, monthly *mushāʿaras* (poetical contests) were held, a set theme being specified in advance for each meeting. These themes, which included "the rainy season", "winter" and "patriotism", were chosen to discourage the use of antique poetical diction. Āzād opened the series with a lecture on the nature of poetic art, and wrote poems for the meetings. Nevertheless, even allowing for criticism based on prejudice or personal animosity, Āzād's poetry hardly enhanced his reputation; and it was not he, but Altāf Husayn Hālī, [q.v.] who also took part in the *mushāʿaras*, who came to be recognised as the pioneer of the "new" poetry, both for his verse and his critical writings. Nevertheless, a reappraisal of Āzād's verse is overdue. It is uneven

in quality; but there is strength and drive behind a poem like *Ūlū 'l-ʿazmī* (Resolution).

Āzād wrote some important prose works, which were better received than his verse, and indeed ultimately gained him recognition as a great—some would say the greatest—master of Urdu prose. Yet he was destined never to be free from some hostile, even carping, criticism. *Nayrang-i kḥayāl* (1880) is a collection of thirteen allegorical essays, translated—with minor changes and interpolations—from the English of Samuel Johnson, Addison and their contemporaries. *Sukḥandān-i-Fārs*, based on his lectures on Persian language and literature, dates from 1872, but was not published until 1907. However, his fame rests chiefly on his long critical account of Urdu poetry, *Ab-i-hayāt* (1881). His last major work, *Darbār-i-akbarī* (1898), is a dazzling account of the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar [q.v.], but, despite its rich style, it is often described as a failure. Āzād's prose is imaginative and colourful, far removed from the straightforward style of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān and Hālī. Muhammad Sadiq (*History of Urdu literature*, 300) says that it "recalls old patterns in its syntactical peculiarities and word-arrangement", and adds, perhaps with a little exaggeration, that its syntax seems Persian. Āzād was not directly involved in the 'Aligāh Movement, but was highly respected by its leaders. Hālī wrote complimentary reviews of *Nayrang-i-kḥayāl* and *Ab-i-hayāt*.

The last twenty years of Āzād's life were marred by periods of mental illness bordering on insanity. Personal tragedies, and overwork—including his edition of *Dhawḳ's Diwān*—have been blamed for this. He died in Lahore in 1910.

Bibliography: In addition to information given above, some of the many reprints of Āzād's works may be mentioned; thus for *Ab-i-hayāt*, Lahore 1950, Faizabad 1966. As for *Darbār-i-akbarī*, Muhammad Ibrāhīm, editor of the Lahore edition of 1910, claims in his preface that his text is more complete and more in keeping with Āzād's intentions than the original (1898) edition of Mir Mumtāz 'Alī. There is a Lucknow edition n.d., but ca. 1965. For *Nayrang-i-kḥayāl*, there is a Karachi edition of 1961. Aghā Muhammad Bākīr has edited selected articles by Āzād (*Makālāt Maulānā M. H. Āzād*, Lahore 1966). *Kiṣāṣ-i-Hind* was reprinted in Lahore (1961) and Karachi (1962). Selected letters have been published: *Maktūbāt-i-Āzād*, Lahore 1907, and *Makālīb-i-Āzād*, Lahore 1966. The collected poetry was published as *Nazm-i-Āzād*, Lahore 1910.

Among critical biographies, Muhammad Sadiq's *Muhammad Husayn Āzād—his life and work*, Lahore 1965, is of prime importance. The same author's shorter account in his *History of Urdu literature*, London 1964, 288-302, includes a conveniently brief analysis of Āzād's prose style (297-301), with extracts. In Urdu, there is *Djāhān Bānū Begum's Muhammad Husayn Āzād*, Hyderabad Deccan, 1940. Among detailed studies of *Ab-i-hayāt*, mention must be made of Riqāwī Mas'ūd Hasan's *Ab-i-hayāt kā tankīd muḥalla'a*, Lucknow 1953. Hālī's reviews of *Nayrang-i-kḥayāl* and *Ab-i-hayāt*, originally published in the 'Aligāh University Gazette, are available in *Kulliyāt-i-nathr-i-Hālī*, Lahore 1968, ii, 176-83 and 184-94.

(J. A. HAYWOOD)

ĀZĀDĪ (v.), freedom, synonymous with Arabic *hurriyya* [q.v.]. Deriving from the Avestan word *ā-zāta* and the Pahlavi word *āzūt* (noble), the word

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