



FARANGĪ MAḤALL

FARANGĪ MAḤALL (FERANGĪ MAḤAL), family of Indian Muslim teachers, Hanafite scholars, and mystics active over the last 300 years. The family claims descent, through the well-known 11th-century Persian Hanbalite scholar and Sufi poet ‘Abd-Allāh Anṣārī (q.v.) Heravī, from Abū Ayyūb Kāled Anṣārī (d. ca. 52/672), host of the Prophet Moḥammad at Medina (Hāšemī, pp. 20, 124-30; Beaucueil, tr., p. 38; Walī-Allāh, *’Omda*, fol. 1b; M.-Ḥ. Anṣārī, pp. 16, 37, 384). During the Timurid invasion of Persia and Afghanistan ‘Alā’-al-Dīn Heravī, a descendant of ‘Abd-Allāh in the nineteenth generation, went to India and stayed with relatives at Barnāwa in the present Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh (M.-Ḥ. Anṣārī, pp. 23, 373), where he also died; his son Neẓām-al-Dīn migrated to Sehālī, a village in the present Barabanki district. Neẓām-al-Dīn and his descendants became reputed as teachers, scholars, and saints (M.-H. Anṣārī, pp. 41-42). One of the latter, Qoṭb-al-Dīn Sehālwī, was among the foremost scholars of the 17th century and the author of many books; he was murdered in a quarrel on 19 Rajab 1103/6 April 1692 (M.-Ḥ. Anṣārī, p. 48), and his library was burned. In compensation the Mughal emperor Awrangzēb (1068-1118/1658-1707) allotted a building in Eḥaṭa Čerāg Bayg in Lucknow to his sons Moḥammad As‘ad and Moḥammad Sa‘īd, who assembled the family there. The building, formerly occupied by a European trader, was known as Farangī kā Maḥall (Palace of the European), and the family subsequently became known as Ferangī Maḥal (‘Alī, p. 167; Āzād Belgrāmī, p. 209; Abu’l-‘Alā).

A third brother, Neẓām-al-Dīn Moḥammad (ca. 1089-9 Jomādā I 1161/ca. 1678-7



May 1748), was, like his father, fluent in both Arabic and Persian and had full command of all branches of learning subsumed under the headings *mā'qūlāt* (rational) and *manqūlāt* (traditional; Āzād Belgrāmī, pp. 209, 220; 'Alī, pp 167, 241; Walī-Allāh, 'Omda). He composed a large number of works, mostly commentaries and scholia (*ḥawāšī*) on standard religious and philosophical books (M.-Ḥ. Anṣārī, p. 26). His main contributions, however, were to turn the Farangī Maḥall into a major center of religious learning and to develop the curriculum, *Dars-e neẓāmī*, balancing the two branches of learning; it became standard throughout India and is still followed in most *madrasas* on the subcontinent. Neẓām-al-Dīn and Moḥammad Sa'īd's son Aḥmad 'Abd-al-Ḥaqq (19 Rajab 1103-9 Du'l Ḥejja 1167/27 March 1692-27 September 1754) were disciples of the famous Qāderī Sufī saint 'Abd-al-Razzāq of Bānsa, and the family has remained closely linked with him throughout its history.

Neẓām-al-Dīn's son 'Abd-al-'Alī (1142-12 Rajab 1225/1729-13 August 1810) and great-nephew the logician Moḥammad Ḥasan (d. 3 Ṣafar 1209/30 August 1794) were more inclined toward rational subjects, and in reply to a taunt of rationalists by the scholar saint 'Abd-al-'Azīz of Delhi 'Abd-al-'Alī wrote *Resāla al-arkān al-arba'a* on jurisprudence; 'Abd al 'Azīz was so much impressed by the erudition embodied in it that he addressed the author as Baḥr-al-'Olūm, the epithet by which he became universally known. Baḥr-al-'Olūm wrote on all branches of *ma'qūlāt* and *manqūlāt*, in Arabic and Persian; his books totaled more than 100, some comprising several volumes. In mysticism he followed the doctrine of *waḥdat-al-wojūd* (lit., unity of being) propounded by Ebn al-'Arabī (q.v.) and, from this perspective, wrote a remarkable commentary on *Maṭnawī-e ma'nawī* by the Persian poet Jalāl-al-Dīn Rūmī. He taught in several cities and died in Madras.

Moḥammad Ḥasan's writings consist mainly of commentaries and scholia on such philosophical works as Moḥebb-Allāh Behārī's *Sollām-al-'olūm*, Maḥmūd Jawnpūrī's *Šams al-bāzīgāh*, and those of Mollā Ṣadra Šīrāzī. In the same and succeeding generations Aḥmad Anwār-al-Ḥaqq (1155-26 Ša'bān 1236/1742-29 May 1821) was more inclined toward mysticism. Moḥammad Mobīn (1157-22 Rabī' II 1225/1744-27 May 1810), a grandson of Aḥmad 'Abd-al-Ḥaqq, was one of the most prolific authors in the family; the total of his works, mainly commentaries and scholia on standard texts, was second only to that of Baḥr-al-'Olūm. Nūr-al-Ḥaqq (d. 23 Rabī' I 1238/8 December 1822), son of Aḥmad Anwār-al-Ḥaqq and a pupil of Baḥr-al-'Olūm, excelled in all branches of learning and was a distinguished teacher, as was Moḥammad-Ḥasan's brother



Mo ḥammad-Walī.

Among distinguished Farangī Maḥall scholars of the 19th century were Zohūr-Allāh (1174-17 Rabī' I 1256/1760-19 May 1840), who was particularly renowned as a teacher; the writers Wālī-Allāh (1182-Şafar 1270/1769-November 1853) and 'Abd-al-Ḥalīm (21 Şa'bān 1239-29 Şa'bān 1285/21 April 1824-15 December 1868); the scholar saints 'Abd-al-Walī (1189-22 Şa'bān 1279/1775-12 February 1863), Borhān-al-Ḥaqq (Moḥarram 1214-Moḥarram 1295/June 1799-January 1878), and 'Abd-al-Razzāq (23 Du'-ḥejja 1236-25 Şafar 1307/19 September 1821-21 October 1889); and the brothers Ne'mat-Allāh (d. 3 Moḥarram 1290/3 March 1873) and Raḥmat-Allāh (d. 17 Jomādā I 1305/1 February 1888). The latter founded the Čašma-ye Raḥmat *madrasa* at Ġāzīpūr in Uttar Pradesh, which remains an important educational institution today. The most distinguished member of the family in this period was, however, Moḥammad 'Abd-al-Ḥayy, son of 'Abd-al-Ḥalīm (26 Du'-l-qa'da 1264-29 Rabī' I 1304/24 October 1848-26 December 1886), who, though he lived only thirty-nine years, left more than 100 books (most listed in Brockelmann, *GAL S II*, pp. 857-58) and is still renowned for his erudition. Among surviving manuscripts by 'Abd-al-Ḥayy are *Ḳayr al-'amal fī tarājem 'olamā' Farangī Maḥall* and *Ḥasrat al-'ālam*, both in the Jamāl Miān Ferangī Maḥlī collection, Karachi. Other noteworthy scholars contemporary with 'Abd-al-Ḥayy were Moḥammad-Na'im (d. 23 Rabī' II 1318/20 August 1900) and 'Abd-al-Wahhāb (d. 2 Moḥarram 1321/31 March 1909).

The family has maintained its traditions in the present century. 'Abd-al-Bāqī (b. 18 Rajab 1286/24 November 1869) spent most of his life in Medina and wrote at least nineteen books (see, e.g., *Takmīla-ye Ḳayr al-'amal*, Jamāl Miān Ferangī Maḥlī collection, Karachi; photocopy Mufti Reżā collection, Farangī Maḥall, Lucknow). His student Qīām-al-Dīn 'Abd-al-Bārī (q.v.; 1295-1344/1878-1926), in addition to being a great scholar and prolific author, was among the foremost leaders of the struggle against British rule in the subcontinent. His contemporaries 'Abd-al-Majīd and 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd were erudite scholars and teachers. 'Abd-al-Aḥad Šamšād, Barakat-Allāh Reżā, Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Matīn, Amān-al-Ḥaqq Anwār, and En'ām-Allāh En'ām were well-known Urdu poets.

The present generation of the family has turned toward modern professions and are active as journalists, university professors, surgeons, and engineers. The women of the family are active in modern education.



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