



## OZAI-DURRANI, ATAULLAH K.

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**OZAI-DURRANI, ATAULLAH K.**, the Afghan inventor and developer of fast-cooking rice, marketed under the name “Minute Rice,” who left more than half of his one million dollar estate for the translation and study of the works of the 19th-century poets, [Ġāleb](#) (d. 1869) and Mir Taqi Mir (d. 1810). He died of lung cancer at the age of 67 on Saturday May 2, 1964, at Swedish Hospital in Englewood, Colorado.

In 1941, Ozai-Durrani brought a portable stove to the office of an executive of General Foods Corporation and cooked the rice that he had invented in 60 seconds, thus becoming wealthy overnight (Lelyveld). He had established his method by 1939, after years of experimenting at a home laboratory, and having studied works on rice at the New York Public Library (*Annual of Urdu Studies* 4, 1984, p. 97, reprint of *New York Times*, May 5, 1964, p. 43).

In his will, Ozai-Durrani stated that his bequest should be paid “to Harvard University or such non-profit institution as my trustees select ... for the purpose of sponsoring and furthering a program of continuing research into and translation of the works of Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib and Meer Taqui Meer...with the object of making available in English their writings and the historic setting thereof, as a memorial to my friend Syud Hossain, scholar and former Ambassador from India to Egypt.” Hossain, a disciple of Mohandas K. Gandhi, had come to America frequently on lecture tours in the 1920s and 1930s, when the pair may have met each other.

This bequest was used by Harvard University to fund the appointment of



Annemarie Schimmel as Professor of Indo-Muslim Studies, and the publication of *Three Mughal Poets: Mir, Sauda, Mir Hasan* in 1968, and *Ghalib 1797-1869: Life and Letters* in 1969, both by Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam (*op. cit.*, p. 99, Editor's note).

This was apparently not the first time that Ozai-Durrani had funded research in this area: it is reported that he gave Rs. 100,000 (?) to the Department of Urdu at Aligarh Muslim University for a "Syud Hossain Memorial Professorship" and a project to translate Ghalib's Urdu verse into English. However, this did not lead to anything, and consequently Ozai-Durrani withdrew his support (*op. cit.*, p. 99, Editor's note).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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*Annual of Urdu Studies* 4, 1984, pp. 97-99.

Joseph Lelyveld, "Inventor Leaves Half Million for Translation of 2 Persian Poets," *The New York Times*, June 19, 1964, p. 33.

Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Three Mughal Poets: Mir, Sauda, Mir Hasan*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968.

Idem, ed. and tr., *Ghalib 1797-1869: Life and Letters*, Cambridge, Mass., 1969.

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