

## *Maulana Mohammed Ali Jauhar as Journalist*

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The post-1857 period of Indian history saw the rise of a militant Muslim press. Four Muslim political journalists Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Maulana Mohammed Ali, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad emerged on the scene.<sup>1</sup> In this essay an attempt is being made to give a brief description of Mohammed Ali as a journalist.

His article "Thoughts on the present discontent" written in 1907 for the *Times of India* soon established his reputation as a forceful writer of clear thinking. Having won appreciation for his abilities as a writer and thinker added a lot to his zeal to try to safeguard his community's future, Mohammed Ali started contributing articles on topics of public interest in the leading newspapers and periodicals. His writings and contributions to different papers deepened his taste for journalism. Finally he opted for that profession.

"The reason which so irresistibly impelled me to take up journalism was", in his own words, "that the affairs of my community just at that juncture made it the only avenue through which I could prove of any appreciable use. I felt that I should now assist my community in taking its proper share in the political life of the country".<sup>2</sup> Thus journalism for him became a national mission. In 1910, Mohammed Ali left his job and started an English newspaper *Comrade* from Calcutta on 14 January 1911, with himself as its editor.<sup>3</sup>

Mohammed Ali's preference for English journalism was mainly due to the anti-Muslim attitude of the existing English press. Their

misrepresentation of the Muslim cause<sup>4</sup> compelled him to select the "alien tongue of the British as the medium of communication of his ideas in order to address his appeal to the British nation and the Government".<sup>5</sup> It did not take long for his journalistic venture to meet with unexpected success and it readily became the spokesman of the restless Muslim elite as well as of the Muslim masses. This was acknowledged even by the U.P. government in a report issued in 1914, that there was no paper which had "so much influence with the students as *Comrade*, and no individual has the authority over them which is exercised by Mohammed Ali."<sup>6</sup>

Being the ideal of the younger generation he started political training of the Muslim youth. The articles and editorials in *Comrade* created an unprecedented political consciousness among the educated Muslim youth. In retrospect it is observed that perhaps without these revolutionary measures the Muslims could have never succeeded in their struggle for freedom. The verses selected as the motto for the *Comrade*, were:

Stand upright, speak thy thought, declare,  
The Truth thou has that all my share.  
Be bold, proclaim it everywhere,  
They only live who dare.

(William Morris)<sup>7</sup>

The policy of *Comrade* as defined by Mohammed Ali himself was:

We are partisan of none, comrade of all. We deeply feel many dangers of increasing controversy between races and races, creeds and creeds, and earnestly desire a better understanding between the contending elements of the body-politics of India.<sup>8</sup>

Since the purpose behind starting *Comrade* was mainly to influence the British policy makers, Mohammed Ali issued his newspapers first from Calcutta, the seat of the government; later he shifted to Delhi with the transfer of capital there.<sup>9</sup>

*Comrade* criticised the British policies in India with characteristic frankness and because of its bold views and flawless language, the paper soon became a top ranking organ throughout the country. Mohammed Ali devoted the columns of his paper to both national and international issues, safeguarding Muslim interests at home and abroad. In this way *Comrade* started bringing the Muslim *ummah* closer. The

International situation at the time of *Comrade's* appearance in 1911, was described by Mohammed Ali in the following words: "I did not expect that any but a small fraction of my attention and energy would be attracted by Muslim politics outside the confines of my own country."<sup>10</sup>

Most of Mohammed Ali's time and energy was consumed by international politics with regard to Muslims' problems all over the world. Referring to *Comrade's* services as early as August 1912, Maulana Azad stated that the paper, even though it was not exchanged with Arabic papers, found a place along with the Arab journals of the time, and the *Thra wai Funun*, a highly respected journal of Istanbul reproduced its cartoons and photographs".<sup>11</sup>

Mohammed Ali always stood for pan-Islamism and taking up the Muslim cause, tried to thwart the British colonial designs. Any threat to Muslim solidarity would badly disturb him and once during the Balkan Wars he even went to the extent of trying to commit suicide. In his own words: "My feelings during the disastrous war in the Balkans were at one time so overpowering that I must confess I even contemplated suicide."<sup>12</sup>

During the Italo-Turkish war and the Balkan wars he fully supported the Turkish policies. *Comrade* regularly published special daily war bulletins, highlighting the Turkish point of view. He also helped in arranging the despatch of two medical missions to Turkey. He appealed to the Muslim community to buy Turkish-Bonds in order to support the war effort and also suggested the establishment of a Turkish News Agency in India. *Comrade's* advocacy of the cause of Islam earned international appreciation also and a pamphlet from Turkey entitled "Come over into Macedonia and help us" annoyed the British government to the extent that it forfeited the pamphlet.<sup>13</sup>

*Comrade* continued its publication in these hostile circumstances. In due course the First World War broke out in which Mohammed Ali did not like Turkey to participate. Since there was no option left with Turkey, Mohammed Ali started justifying the Turkish stand and wrote a forceful reply to an article published in *Times (London)* under the caption "The Choice of the Turks" in *Comrade* on 26 September 1914, under the same heading.<sup>14</sup> Some of his well-wishers like Mir Mahfooz Ali, Raja Ghulam Hussain and Hakim Ajmal Khan wanted him not to publish it. But his reply was that he knew that he was signing his "death-warrant but now when I have made up my mind to publish it,

nothing can be done.”<sup>15</sup> As Mohammed Ali had already sensed it, the previous security deposit was forfeited and a fresh security was demanded by the authorities. The British Government showed a strange lack of imagination and forfeited the security of *Comrade*. Mohammed Ali took the case to the court, but in vain. *Comrade* and *Hamdard* were closed for the time being.

Instead of being cowed down by such transitional problems Mohammed Ali faced these challenges with steadfastness and the editorial of the last issue of the *Comrade*, published on 7 November, 1914, concluded: “We began our career with the words of hope and courage that have appeared for close upon four years on our title page, Stand upright... We have lived because we have dared and we shall still dare and we shall still live.”<sup>16</sup>

After that Mohammed Ali had to close down publication of his papers and a little later he was interned. Through his writings Mohammed Ali tried to bring the Hindus and Muslims closer to each other. He visualised, “a concordat like that of Canada, based on a marriage of convenience between Hindus and Muslims which should be honourably contracted and honourably maintained”.<sup>17</sup>

To quote from the first editorial of *Comrade*, “We deeply feel many hazard of increasing controversy between races and races; creeds and creeds and earnestly desire a better understanding between the contending elements of the body politics of India”.<sup>18</sup> He was hopeful about the solution of the communal problems of India.

Mohammed Ali was a great supporter of separate electorates for Muslims and wrote a number of editorials on the subject. He was bitterly opposed to the annulment of the partition of Bengal. He was of the view that Muslims had suffered because they were loyal and contended. “The criticism of the revocation of Bengal made him unpopular both with the British and the Hindus”.<sup>19</sup>

The first major movement in which Mohammed Ali participated as an active and leading worker was the demand of the Muslims for a university. He put new life in the movement.<sup>20</sup> The Muslims of the subcontinent had to face another problem in July, 1913. It was the Cawnpur Mosque demolition incident. Mohammed Ali did his best to dissuade the authorities from demolishing a portion of the mosque. When it was demolished, he was in the forefront of the countrywide protest and did all he could in projecting the Muslim point of view. He

was declared "a mischievous agitator, largely responsible for creating the present agitation by provocative misrepresentation in his paper for which we have had to take security from him". Lord Harding cabled this frantic message to Lord Crene, the Secretary of State for India on 12 September 1913.<sup>21</sup>

Mohammed Ali was ultimately successful in removing from the minds of his people all fears of the British Government's power and authority. He always stood for justice. Petty problems, even like the incident of Delhi Durbar when the Gackwad of Baroda was victimised won his sympathy, and he came forward to his help. Mohammed Ali worked for all Indians, irrespective of their caste or creed. He wrote continuously for Indianization of the services and greater measure of constitutional reforms, safeguarding the rights of Indians in South Africa, furthering of education and a number of other issues. He also fought for the freedom of the press.

Even the genesis of Pakistan could be traced from a careful study of his writings. The proposal for a partition of India into Muslim India and non-Muslim India was made in a humorous column 'Gap' by 'Bamboo' on 10 May, 1913.<sup>22</sup> His three letters from his death-bed are enough to prove that in his last days he had no faith in a United India. Though this thinking was developed because of the high handedness of Hindus and the British Government than anything else.

Ishrat Rahmani has noted a letter from Mohammed Ali to his daughter, Zahra Begum from Hyde Park Hotel, London written on 26 December 1930. Some extracts are as follows;

The Hindu-Muslim problem of India is not provincial but it is national and historical. It should be solved on only the principle of 'Power for Majority'. It means that the power should be in the hands of Hindus in their majority areas and in the hands of Muslims in Muslim majority areas...<sup>23</sup>

Then, he wrote a lengthy letter to Ramsay McDonald Prime Minister of Britain, on January 1, 1931.<sup>24</sup> This letter is also on the same subject as the above. He beautifully pleaded the interest of the Muslims. Moreover, another letter is also referred to in *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, which he wrote to his daughter from London. The letter says, away other things is as follows: "I want a circle on top of my letter-pad, embossed with the words Muslim India".<sup>25</sup>

Mohammad Ali was also the leader of young Muslims. In regard to the wide impact of *Comrade* on youth, Abdur Rahman Siddiqui writes: "The *Comrade* taught the university educated Muslims the Islamic out look on domestic and world politics".<sup>26</sup> Not only Muslim but Hindu students were much impressed by the writings of Mohammed Ali in *Comrade*.<sup>27</sup> His long editorials which seem to exasperate a reader today were hungrily devoured at Aligarh where the students got their money's worth in stimulating reading material which lasted them a whole week. They were grateful for it.<sup>28</sup> As reported by the government agencies, 'No paper has so much influence with the students as *Comrade* and no individual has the authority over them which is exercised by Mohammed Ali'.<sup>29</sup> Francis Robinson further writes: "His newspaper helped to create radical Muslim politics by focusing the uneasiness and dissatisfaction of the young educated Muslims scattered throughout the district and low paid Government jobs of Northern India to specific issues".<sup>30</sup>

*Comrade* was a leading English paper in the subcontinent. Its flawless and forceful language had no match at home and abroad. According to Lovat Frazer, editor of the *Times of India*, "No Indian and perhaps very few Englishmen could write better than he did".<sup>31</sup> It was often difficult to distinguish between his humour and that of the *London Punch*.<sup>32</sup>

*Comrade's* column 'Gap' was very popular in England. Its language was sometimes difficult for the common Englishman to understand.<sup>33</sup> Even the Europeans liked it and a large number of officials felt obliged to subscribe to the paper. It is no exaggeration to say that soon it became a fashion with educated Indians and bureaucrats to subscribe to *Comrade*.<sup>34</sup>

British and Indians, high and low, all were eager to read the paper, so much so that dignitaries like Lord and Lady Hardinge, Sir James Meston, Sir Charles Clewland, Sir G.P. Wilson, Ramsay Macdonald, Sir Michael O'Dwyer all used to wait anxiously to receive the paper at the earliest after its publication. Lady Hardinge was so fond of *Comrade* that she had subscribed to a separate copy for herself. She made anxious inquiries on the telephone if the publication of the issue was delayed.<sup>35</sup>

With a prince of the House of Kaiser Wilhelm, the ex-Emperor of Germany, the files of *Comrade* were seen by Mohammed Ali himself.<sup>36</sup>

The said prince became subscriber of the *Comrade* during his tour of India when he stayed with Lord Hardinge.<sup>37</sup>

Mohammed Ali used superior paper and quality printing, paid contributors on a lavish scale and included verses as well as short stories in order to make it as attractive as possible for English readers. After they had to go to their homeland they took the files of the *Comrade* to present to editors of leading newspapers as a gift over there.

The official appreciation, however, was only short-lived. After sometime when Muslim politics developed on new lines under Mohammed Ali's guidance, the healthy and frank criticism was resented by the authorities and it began to lose that popularity which it enjoyed among the officials circles earlier.

The reversal of the partition of Bengal and some other acts of the Government compelled Mohammed Ali to change the tone of his paper and go into the opposition quarters, referring to which Sir Michael O'Dwyer writes, "It was probably the reversal, in December 1911, of the partition of Bengal, in deference to Bengali Hindu agitation, that drove him (Mohammed Ali) and other young Mohammadans into opposition to a Government which they thought had played them false".<sup>38</sup>

Lord Hardinge again reported to his Government in the middle of October, 1914. "The tone of the Press in this country is very satisfactory with the exception of two papers. One edited by Mohammed Ali and the other by Zafar Ali... Mohammed Ali is rather different. His paper, *Comrade* is also very bad in tone".<sup>39</sup> In his message he also suggested internment of Mohammed Ali in Rampur State. After the closure of *Comrade* and *Hamdard* and the internment of the Ali Brothers, Lord Hardinge gleefully informed his Government on 22 October, 1915, "I certainly congratulate myself that after I had interned Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali of the *Comrade*, all Mohammadan agitation ceased almost simultaneously"<sup>40</sup>

The path of journalism for Mohammed Ali was not exactly a bed of roses. The reason was that he was always in opposition to the Government and led an insecure life under threat of the various Press Laws, penalties and financial insolvency. Mohammed Ali planned to have an Urdu journal of his own for the masses while still in Calcutta. He expressed his views in *Comrade* on 14th September, 1912, "We

must educate the masses, make them useful citizens... To teach the masses, we must use their own language... We have decided to launch, so to speak, a companion vessel to the good ship *Comrade* in the shape of our Urdu daily paper".<sup>41</sup>

He had realised that because of the language barrier, *Comrade* had a limited appeal. He wrote about *Comrade*, 'It is the advocate of the people at the bar of their rulers, but it is an educator of public opinion only for very microscopic, though far from insignificant or unimportant minority. After all, what are the 2000 Indian subscribers of *Comrade* among 70 million Musalmans and 245 million other Indians".<sup>42</sup> Discussing the question at length, he called for the promotion of Urdu journalism with a view to reach a major readership among the masses.

By the time *Comrade* was well established Mohammed Ali was in a position to go ahead with his programme to start another paper in the language of the masses. In his own words, "*Comrade* was only a part of my scheme as a journalist. I had found that to be the proper moment for enlarging the sphere of my work by publishing a daily newspaper in Urdu, the vernacular of so large a part of the Indian population and especially of the Musalmans".<sup>43</sup>

In the meantime, as a fore-runner to *Hamdard*, the *Naqib-i-Hamdard* was started on 23 February, 1913. It was a single paged most wanted and popular newspaper. It continued publishing till *Hamdard* made its appearance.<sup>44</sup> However, when all the necessary arrangements were completed the first issue of the daily *Hamdard* came out, typographed, on 13 June, 1913, and, there is no doubt that it was the first Urdu newspaper of its class. Allama Iqbal welcome the idea and sent an encouraging message and thereafter he used to contribute to the paper.<sup>45</sup>

It was the first innovation in Urdu journalism introduced by a change in printing from 'lithography' to 'type' though this technique proved a failure, being costly and unfamiliar to the readers. They therefore urged Mohammed Ali to have the system of printing changed. It took about a year to change the system resulting in the circulation shooting up by leaps and bounds to touch to the figure of 20,000.<sup>46</sup>

The paper was to be financed through sale of debentures. The printing press had also been established in 1912 with the help of his



readers, who purchased the debentures, of 20 to 25 thousand rupees, for a period of 15 years in response to his appeal.<sup>47</sup>

Mohammed Ali planned to maintain *Hamdard* on the same standard, dignity and design, as that of *Comrade*, but for obvious reasons he decided to avoid discussions of a higher political nature in it. *Hamdard* contained leading articles and had also some other interesting and attractive features like, 'Kashkol', newsletters from Muslim countries, and, in addition to all this it had a high literary standard.<sup>48</sup> It was certainly the first Indian newspaper which directly had services from foreign news agencies like the Associated Press and Reuters.<sup>49</sup>

It was exactly according to the ideals of its founder, for he visualised, "A first class, up-to-date, Urdu daily with a most capable, well-informed and select editorial staff... What could not a paper achieve if it had men like Sajjad Haider, Enayatullah, Abdul Haq, Ghulam-us-Saqlain, Sheikh Abdul Qadir, Mahfuz Ali and last but not least, Dr. Mohammed Iqbal, on its editorial staff or among its constant contributors".<sup>50</sup>

The policy of the paper was defined by the founder in the following lines, '*Hamdard* was intended to educate the people whereas *Comrade* had to be their spokesman as well, and I was anxious to exclude from the former all exciting topics such as could not be avoided from the latter in the heat of advocacy'.<sup>51</sup> Like *Comrade*, *Hamdard* also had laid new foundations in the field of Urdu journalism. The political writings were imbued with literary elegance.

In a letter written to some unknown person in 1915, Mohammed Ali declared his policy that the articles published in *Comrade* were never reproduced in *Hamdard*.<sup>52</sup>

*Hamdard* also impressed some liberal Hindus to such an extent that they wanted to have his writings translated and reproduced into other vernaculars, viz., Prem Chand, the famous novelist, once submitted a request, asking to allow him to make a Hindi translation of *Hamdard*.<sup>53</sup> Pursuing anti-Government policies *Comrade's* security was forfeited and after its closure *Hamdard* too was not allowed to be printed on its own machines. Mohammed Ali, however, deposited a fresh security for a new printing press. But soon after, on 16 May 1915, along with his brother Shaukat Ali interned. *Hamdard* continued

publication, but it had to face a severe pre-censorship. Shortly after this pre-censorship, *Hamdard* ceased its publication for the time being.

Both the papers were closed down and their founder interned and the re-appeared after long ten years when Mohammed Ali settled down in Delhi in his old house in Kucha Chelan. Both *Comrade* and *Hamdard* were revived. *Comrade* came out on 31 October and *Hamdard* on 8 November 1924.<sup>54</sup>

Abdul Majid Daryabadi narrates the whole story of how Mohammed Ali was able to revive the publication of his papers. "God knows better from how many friends and by what means he collected the money. Seth Abdullah Haroon of Karachi contributed rupees 2000, Seth Umar Sobhani of Bombay, Maulana Abdul Bari Farangi Mahali and others also gave something, but Raja of Mahmoodabad did not come up to expectations."<sup>55</sup>

In reviving these papers Mohammed Ali took upon his shoulders a great responsibility. He was the proprietor, editor and printer of both the papers. He had to work day and night. He was trying to do justice to his twin responsibilities, that of functioning as a journalist and being President of the Indian National Congress at the same time. Being an old patient of diabetes, he was burning the candle at both ends: his day was packed with activity and he worked long into the night writing for his papers. At that time he was also at the peak of his political career. Even Gandhi used to say that his place was in the pocket of the Ali Brothers. Because of his growing political activities he could not spare sufficient time for his journalistic activities. On top of that he was haunted by ever-increasing financial worries. In a letter to Abdul Bari Farangi Mahali on 25 May, 1925 he wrote, "The responsibilities of the two papers, pay and overtime of the staff have exhausted me financially. This month I am unable to pay the staff. I have borrowed Rs.6500 till this day... Farooq Gorakhpuri has gone away with one thousand rupees".<sup>56</sup>

In these circumstances *Comrade* could not maintain its regular appearance although *Hamdard*, with occasional contributions from its able founder, was published daily and never lagged behind others in advocating the cause of Muslims with all the sincerity and force at its command.<sup>57</sup>

During the period when he was in jail, the journalistic atmosphere had totally been changed. Irresponsible journalism had

taken birth and flourished. Subsequently a majority of the readers became addicted to it. But Mohammed Ali, a champion of quality journalism, true to his principles, would not tolerate cheap journalism. In this state of affairs the circulation of the *Hamdard* decreased and losses were increasing which compelled Mohammed Ali to issue repeated appeals for subscriptions, but unfortunately he was unable to muster any remarkable response. This time the British Government was not blamed for termination of the paper but the masses are blamed for doing this painful job by not responding to his repeated calls.

In a letter to Mazharul Haq on 17 July, 1927, Mohammed Ali wrote that "the purpose before me to publish *Comrade* is not to provide luxury to well-to-do people, who enjoy its writings in leisure time, but I want to address the men of action ... *Hamdard* is a 'search' for common Muslims and *Comrade* is a luxury for people like you."<sup>58</sup>

No doubt there were a few dignitaries who wanted *Comrade* to be continued, but it was an expensive publication for Mohammed Ali. This publication taxed heavily upon his time, finance and energy, because due to scarcity of co-workers he had to write a major part of the paper himself.

*Comrade* ended its life with its last issue bearing the date, 22 January, 1926, and *Hamdard* became irregular, when Mohammed Ali left India in 1926 to perform Hajj. He had a light attack of paralysis during his stay in Arabia. *Hamdard*, however, continued, crumbling under heavy losses which after all became unbearable and Mohammed Ali saw no other alternative than to decide on 15 May, 1928, to have no further interest in the paper. Five days later, he finally declared his resolution to close down *Hamdard* for ever.<sup>59</sup>

On this occasion in an editorial entitled 'Farewell' (Alwidaa-i-Khair), on 20 May, he wrote: "A newspaper can only work when people feel the need for it and subscribe to it in substantial numbers. Since the people today do not seem to feel the need of *Hamdard*, I am obliged to close it down".<sup>60</sup>

He further wrote, "In January the loss was rupees two hundred, in February and March the loss was about rupees two hundred for month. Now there is no way out, but that I should close down *Hamdard*".<sup>61</sup> In a letter to Maulana Shaukat Ali written on 5 April 1927, he had pointed out the loss of this venture as rupees 1500 per month.<sup>62</sup>

After Mohammed Ali was relieved of this expensive publication, some of his sincere comrades, like Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Zafarul Mulk and others came forward to try their luck and took over the management of *Hamdard* in their own hands. The name of Mohammed Ali disappeared from the front page, as he could not agree to retain it, yet it was generally considered to be his mouthpiece. This venture also failed and on the fateful day of 12 April, 1928, Mohammed Ali, with a broken heart had to declare that "Hamdard is closed and closed for ever".<sup>63</sup>

*Comrade* and *Hamdard* had a very good start but met with a tragic end. Though their editor was the most honest and dedicated to his mission, the life of a paper does not mainly depend on the ability of its editor but it also needs financial support for its smooth running and survival. Unfortunately, Mohammed Ali was not financially sound and he never bothered to accept any help from any source at the cost of his principles and ideals. His papers were never supported by advertisements and he never allowed a place for cheap advertisements. In the last days of *Hamdard* when Mohammed Ali faced acute financial problems, an incident is noteworthy to prove how he stuck to his principles. In March 1929, Mohammed Ali went to Burma. During his absence fell the jubilee of the Maharaja of Alwar. A request was received from Abdul Majid Daryabadi, the editor of *Hamdard*, for the publication of a jubilee number at the request of Alwar State. The editor sought instructions from Mohammed Ali who wired from Rangoon on 13 March, that the *Hamdard* could not depart from its principles even though the request came from a person who had so generously financed his visit to Europe for medical treatment. As a result the special number was not published.<sup>64</sup>

It was *Hamdard* through which Mohammed Ali introduced Gandhi to Urdu with the latter lavishing praise on him, as a 'general fighting for right and truth', and the 'young man in whom India takes pride'.<sup>65</sup> Mohammad Ali made Jawaharlal Nehru Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee during his presidentship. It was he who had the proud distinction of presiding over the sessions of the Indian National Congress, the All-India Muslim League and the Khilafat Conference simultaneously.<sup>66</sup> He was the first political leader of India to be tried for sedition and who openly planned to make the British to quit India.<sup>67</sup> That is why he was repeatedly sent behind bars. It is interesting to note his views about being sent to jail. 'Internment and

imprisonment are the ways of the prophets, and God the Almighty has selected this way for myself.<sup>68</sup>

Although Mohammed Ali had entered the field of journalism without any training or apprenticeship, yet he set high standards which are even applicable to the modern journalism of the present age. Quality not and quantity was his aim. His selflessness, his sincerity, his devotion to the cause he held dear, would not permit a deviation from the ethics which governed his life. His papers reflected his personality. It was no way difficult for him to enrich himself by changing his motto, and to misguide his people, but the brave person as he was, he could not be carried away by worldly temptations. He sacrificed what ever he had, to remain true and loyal to his ideals.

He was never a foe or a friend of anyone for personal reasons. Jawaharlal Nahru once said, after partition, "If Maulana had been alive and had a chance to come to India, we may have convinced him of the Congress point of view".<sup>69</sup> He may be right or wrong in his above assessment, it is quite clear that Mohammad Ali had no enmity for anybody on personal grounds. Courage marked his writings, but he never believed in getting emotional to please the public taste. He refused to give place in his papers to two events, i.e., the decision of the Afghan Government to execute a couple of apostates from Islam, and the case of a stupid Hindu who had slandered the Prophet Muhammad(PBUH). He never invited the Government to attack his papers by being emotional but when it was needed, he never hesitated to lodge 'frank criticism'.

He left a positive effect on his contemporary journalists through his principles and gave a good name to native journalism even abroad. There existed in India at Mohammed Ali's time, popular journalism like that of *Zamindar*. His was 'quality journalism'. For the progress of journalism in a country, both kinds of the journalism are necessary to go side by side.<sup>70</sup> In Urdu journalism, the tradition of 'Editorial Conference' was also set up by Mohammed Ali.<sup>71</sup>

Mohammed Ali gave much importance to the ethics of journalism. On an occasion, Abdul Majid Daryabadi tried to seek permission to publish a letter to defame some hostile person. He had to listen, 'No, never at all, it cannot be published.'<sup>72</sup> About irresponsible journalism he once said, "People like those papers which follow the journalistic principle 'One pice for one abuse', or who live on the

income of cheap advertisements". He added 'These papers are not newspapers but viewpapers'.<sup>73</sup>

Mohammed Ali's ideals of journalism are adequately reflected in his different writings. About the duties of a journalist, he wrote in an editorial of *Comrade* on January 6, 1912: "All that the journalist is expected to do is to see that his chronicle is accurate, and that the material he provides for the historian can be relied upon for the construction of the latter's fabric". He further wrote about the duty of a journalist that "He has to appear not only as the spokesman but also as the leader of public opinion, not only to advocate the claims of the people but also to preach from the journalistic pulpit to his flock". He concluded "Our opinions have been offered more as friendly suggestions to our readers than as sermons delivered from a great height".<sup>74</sup> Mohammed Ali gave a lot of importance to ethics of journalism and in the course of a reply to a letter from Nizam-ud-Din, a person from Gujrat, intending to start a paper, he suggested the following code of ethics.

1. A newspaper should remain above personal interests. It should exercise moderation in both opposition and support. The opposition be confined to principles.
2. Cheap writings be avoided. It should demonstrate seriousness and sobriety.
3. A newspaper is collection of news. So it should mainly consist of news material.
4. A newspaper should aim at the betterment of its own nation but should see to it that it does not harm other nations.
5. Articles from other writers must be invited.
6. Some representatives should be appointed at different places. They may be paid-ones or volunteer contributors from among friends.
7. A newspaper should be free of all sectarian and religious controversies.
8. The news should be accurate and authentic.
9. The editorial should be based on deep research and study.<sup>75</sup>

A few words about his writing power and knowledge of subjects: He wrote, "I am master of everything, leaving science and higher mathematics, there are perhaps few lines in which I may be dubbed ignorant and wherein, after a little study, I cannot make a success".<sup>76</sup> He was gifted with a powerful memory. Hundreds of references and legal points were part of this marvellous memory. He was also an authority on the Quran and Hadith.<sup>77</sup> In his writings and speeches he quoted from both the sources fluently. In fact during his internment in

Chindhwara he studied the Quran regularly so that many of its parts were learnt by him by heart.<sup>78</sup> The internment changed the Ali brothers' whole life pattern. "Their outlook was also changed. Before imprisonment both the brothers were clean shaved, but after they were released, they were with beards".<sup>79</sup> Especially in the second phase of his journalistic career he quoted extensively from the Quran and Hadith. After December, 1926 onwards, a verse from the Holy Quran with translation and paraphrase was always published in *Hamdard* till its final closure. Friday was observed as a holiday in place of Sunday in his complex, which shows his deep adherence to Islam.<sup>80</sup>

Talking about the writing style of Mohammed Ali, Jawahar Lal Nehru says "When I was Maulana's Secretary, I had to rewrite an article again and again, even in some cases for six times, and finally, after correction from Maulana, my article was replaced by his corrected one".<sup>81</sup>

A Viceroy of India was of the view, "One comes to know the beauty of English language after going through Mohammed Ali's writings".<sup>82</sup> He used to write continuously, of course, with frequent breaks imposed by friends and visitors. Generally he drafted his articles in piecemeal, that is, after writing a slip it was handed over to the compositors or the calligraphists, as he turned towards his co-workers or visitors he could take up another slip to write and thus complete the article in hand...

Even during travels when hundreds and thousands of his admirers used to wait to have a glimpse of him, he used to write and dispatch, enroute.<sup>83</sup> This was in the second phase of *Hamdard* and *Comrade*. Due to the above-mentioned extra-work and getting no time to revise or correct it some shortcomings crept into some of his writings, i.e., long editorials, repetitions and other literary faults. The faults especially occurred in the second phase. The habit of writing long editorials developed in him due to his political and other activities in which he found no time to be specific. Usually long editorials were boring and he argued so much and went out of topic in his attempt to impress his readers. He realized his shortcomings but he could not help continuing this practice. He himself admitted, "I am always busy with my national duties and find no time to think and correct my writings".<sup>84</sup>

His intense devotion to duty can be imagine from the following anecdote of his busy life. "When Bi Amman (his mother) was near the

death point", writes Mohammed Ali, "and on Wednesday night, was breathing her last, I was at the time busy in reading the proofs of *Comrade*. My sister, under such conditions, called for me. I remained beside the death-bed till 2 a.m. and when at 2.15a.m. she died and her eyes were closed for ever, I left her and returned to my office and again became busy in reading proofs. After offering morning prayers, I stretched myself on the floor. An hour or two later I again started writing to complete an unfinished article. At noon, I was informed that she had been given the last bath and duly wrapped up in a shroud. I had completed my article by then. Laying aside my pen I joined the burial procession".<sup>85</sup> Later, he wrote three articles under the caption, 'Mother', which are worth reading and preserving.

Writing in such unfavourable conditions, mistakes are, excusable. In the later stage of his life he was also a busy speaker. Arguing and usually lengthy writing was due to his oratory and public speaking. "Usually errors and other faults of literature like repetition, and lengthy writing were committed in informal writing, like letters. If he had gone through these writings with enough time at his disposal it would not have happened like that".<sup>86</sup> About his newspapers it is stated: "They were financed from three sources; political journalism, public subscription and the patrons".<sup>87</sup> To start a venture, it was natural for the Ali Brothers to turn to others for help because they were not financially sound to do it by themselves. No doubt Mohammad Ali sought help from other sources to charge his mission, but he was never able to hoard money. He was not able even to save his own property to continue this unprofitable complex. "He did away with his own property, then the jewellery of his wife and after that the house-hold things went this way".<sup>88</sup>

The subventions were only spent on the papers, because these were uncertain and sometimes hardly enough for the running of the papers. In the last days of his journalistic career, it was very difficult for him to make both ends meet, as stated in his letter to Maulana Abdul Bari Farangi Mahali and other friends. An incident noted in *Hayat-i-Jauhar* is not, perhaps, out of place here.

The people say that Mohammed Ali was very wealthy. Only two examples are given to be noted. First; it was the period when *Hamdard's* office was in Delhi. One morning I went to its office; Maulana was busy looking at the letters. Someone came from his home and said that it was the second day of fasting, and if something had come in today's post, send it home to do the needful. Maulana



said with tears in his eyes that it is not sufficient even for despatch of *Hamdard*. I have only one anna in my pocket, take it and ask Begum Sahiba not to wait for me at lunch. The second incident is of Simla when Jauhar was there for his eye treatment. He was worried about the one week's rent of his residence at Simla".<sup>89</sup>

Another incident in this regard is also noteworthy. It was the period when *Comrade* was closed down and *Hamdaard* was also on the decline and friends were already trying to arrange that Mohammed Ali could at least live on what he called 'Khaddar Scale', (the standard of living which was allowed to him in jail). Mohammed Ali was heavily in debt, whereas the Hindu leaders were well provided for by their community. Some Muslim friends, notably Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, arranged to provide for a modest monthly allowance for Mohammed Ali. He, however, declined the offer with thanks.<sup>90</sup>

Mohammed Ali took journalism not as a business but as a national mission to fight for Muslim interests and to give them their proper share in the affairs of the country. He made the people bold enough to fight for their rights through his writings and agitational politics, though the path of journalism for Mohammed Ali was not exactly a bed of roses but mostly a bed of thorns. The reason was that he was always in opposition to the Government and led an insecure journalistic career under constant threats of the various Press Laws and penalties and financial insolvency.

The discussion of Mohammed Ali's journalistic skills can perhaps best be summed up by quoting the words of, an eminent Englishman who remarked that Mohammed Ali "had the heart of Napoleon, the tongue of Burke and the pen of Macaulay".

## NOTES AND REFERENCE

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4. Except for a few Urdu newspapers there was hardly any English daily or weekly that could be considered to be impartially representing the Muslim point of view.

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7. Afzal Iqbal, *The Life and Times of Mohammed Ali*, Lahore, 1974, p.60
8. Allah Buksh Yusufi, *Life of Maulana Mohammed Ali Jauhar*, Karachi, 1970, p. 108
9. The capital of British India government was changed from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911.
10. Mohammed Ali, *op.cit.*, p.40.
11. S. Moinul Haq, *op.cit.*, pp.12-13.
12. Mohammed Ali, *op.cit.*, p.49.
13. A.B. Yusufi, *op.cit.*, p.122.
14. S. Moinul Haq, *op.cit.*, p.24.
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40. *Ibid.*, p.115.
41. Yusufi, *op.cit.*, p.133.
42. S. Moinul Haq, *op.cit.*, p.50.
43. Mohammed Ali, *op.cit.*, p.78.
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45. Yusufi, *op.cit.*, p134.
46. *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, *op.cit.*, p.6.
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53. Yusufi, *op.cit.*, p.138.
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