

Sadia Aziz*

Mosque, Memory and State: A Case Study of *Jama Masjid (India)* and the Colonial State c. 1857

Abstract

This paper discusses how *Masjid-e-Jahan Numa* (Masjid with world vision, popularly known as Jama Masjid) constructed by Emperor Shahjahan, the fifth Mughal ruler in India, shaped the popular memory of people in Delhi and the ruling State alike until the late nineteenth century, two centuries after its construction. This mosque which was built in 1656 became the site of contestations between the Muslims of Delhi and the British Colonial State when the former was involved in a revolt against the latter in 1857 A.D., which is generally known as the Indian mutiny. The memories of violating this monument did leave a drastic impact on the minds of the people for whom this mosque was the symbol of piety, authority and moral prestige.

Keywords

history, memory, mosque, Mughal India, Colonial State

Introduction

Monuments have always occupied an important place in South Asian history, particularly for the medieval kings who constructed magnificent monuments and buildings as signatures of their reign. Grand monuments were erected in order to perpetuate the memory of their 'prosperous' empires. These splendid monuments and buildings were also used as political tools that at times decided what should be retained in the memory of people in the future. Grand constructions in the Indian sub-continent marked imperial ideologies, political agendas and the history of their families. Imperial monuments hold

* University of Delhi, India
Faculty of Social Sciences
Email: sadiaaziz100@gmail.com

strong memories of the past and have the ability to provoke reactions that transcend cultural and societal boundaries. They also encapsulate the desire of those who see themselves in some way as custodians of their pasts to cultivate and encourage emotions and reactions that transcend temporal and spatial realms.¹ In significant ways, the constant presence of such tokens of the past in the form of monuments and texts run through popular memories and reproduce popular knowledge and subjectivity in the present. Through the cultural and inter subjective engagement with manifestation of the past, some of these monuments also “bridge old distinctions such as global-local, individual-cultural, history-memory and even past-present-future.”²

In this paper I have attempted to discuss how one such monument of seventeenth century India, *Masjid-e-Jahan Numa* (Jama Masjid)³ constructed by Emperor Shahjahan, the fifth Mughal ruler in India, shaped the popular memory of the people and the ruling state alike till the late nineteenth century, two centuries after its construction. The mosque complex, right from its inception in the seventeenth century, had enjoyed being a cultural locus and has been the focal point of the socio-political and religious landscape of Shahjahanabad (currently known as *Purani Dilli*) in India. This mosque became a site of contest between the Muslims of Delhi and the colonial state in the wake of the former’s involvement in the revolt against the latter in 1857 A.D. The memories of the violation of this monument did leave a deep impact on the minds of Muslims for whom Jama Masjid was a symbol of their piety and moral prestige. This paper attempts to study how a Mughal monument was used by the British authorities to assert their hegemony and discipline a particular community of faith.

Relationship between memory and history

Before going into the factual details of how the interplay between the colonial state and the Muslims manipulated the memory of Jama Masjid in the nineteenth century, it is first important to theoretically understand the space that history shares with popular memory. Memory becomes important for the writing of history because it reflects on the psychological sentiments attached to historical events.

¹ K. Birth, “The Immanent Past: Culture and Psyche at the Juncture of Memory and History”, *Ethos*, 2006, 34, 2, Special Issue: The Immanent Past, p. 15.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 1–2.

³ Jama Masjid means Congregation Mosque where a large number of devotees can assemble in congregation for prayers.

If we study memory in relation to history then it symbolises a call for thinking through the interrelation between psychological and ideological processes as well as for thinking through the relationship of knowledge that is transmitted orally versus knowledge that relies on literacy for its reproduction.⁴ In contrast to “history” the study of memory seems more local, sentimental and psychological: “It depicts an immediacy that has been lost from history”. Memory is associated with the “personal” and the “subjective” whereas history is associated with the “public” and the “objective.”⁵ History is based on factual evidence but remembering the events and their memories are more powerful than the written word. These memories—representing self and others—are produced through monuments, cultural spaces, and emotional symbols.

Memory is primarily a social phenomenon linked to the identity of social groups. Every social group develops a memory that highlights its own past and its unique identity. Religious monuments play crucial roles in cultivating and nurturing such identity based on memory. This is later strengthened by inventing such a memory based tradition where social memory has been considered as central to national identity. It was raised by the elites in the respective communities to instil emotive bonding through the memorials, art museums, art galleries, monuments and the public rituals.⁶ When social memories become social capital, they tend to get connected to the centres of power, particularly of the state. Then the state plays calculated roles in either cultivating or destroying such social memories surrounding communities.

The monument under study in this paper, the Jama Masjid also became one such site and we witness a transition in the way this mosque was perceived, treated and memorised by the actors of the state and common people. The Mughal Empire that constructed it in 1656 A.D presented it as a monument of its imperial authority and piety. However, the British colonial state, after the uprising of 1857, treated the same monument as a site to be confiscated in order to destroy any social memory of the former Mughal ruling class. Thus, memory in this case became an intense idea which was moved and shaped by commitments and loyalties to various actors in con-

⁴ K. Birth, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵ J. Sian and Lynette Russell, ‘Archaeology, Memory and Oral Tradition: An Introduction’, in *International Journal of Historical Ideology*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Archaeology, Memory and Oral Tradition: An Introduction, (June 2012), p. 4.

⁶ S. Jones, L. Russell, “Archaeology, Memory and Oral Tradition: An Introduction”, *International Journal of Historical Ideology*, 2007, 16, 2, p.3.

flicts. A detailed history of this monument and the way it became a subject to the British colonial policies which tried to jeopardize the memories associated with it has been dealt with in the subsequent sections.

Jama Masjid (Congregational Mosque)

Throughout the history of Muslim Empires—The *Ottomans* (Turkey), *Safawids* (Iran) and *Mughals* (Indian subcontinent)—construction of monuments was an intrinsic principle to exhibit imperial ideology and a way to connect a viewer to the centre of power. In fact the creation and maintenance of monuments sometimes involved a great deal of attention being paid to the discursive messages that accompany the sensory impression.⁷ The same attraction and attention was conceived by the mosques of India after the arrival of Muslim rulers from Central Asia for their political establishments in the Indian Subcontinent. Many of the magnificent mosques in India such as *Qutb Minar*, *Jama Masjid* of Delhi, *Moti Masjid* of Agra etc. have been built from the funds and treasuries of the emperors. The mosques were built by Indians not only for the purpose of worship but also to attract Arab merchants in order to expand their trade overseas. Construction of a mosque was not an activity undertaken only by the State but also by the elite class—princes, nobles, rich merchants—bearing their own names.

The *Masjid* (mosque) is an Arabic word which frequently appears in the Quran that technically means ‘place of prostration.’⁸ It is the place where Muslims bow their heads to the ground in respect of God which is also an important act required in their everyday ritual of prayer called *namaz* in order to express their faith towards their God. The expansion of the *Masjids* was the outcome of the conquest of different lands which led Muslims to build their own space for worship. Eventually, for the consolidation of their new rule the concept of the construction of congregation mosques or *Masjid-e-Jami* or *Jama Masjid* also originated by as early as the eighth century. For Muslims the *Quran* represented a comprehensive revolution of their history, society and intellect and hence for that they established a formal system of worship and gave it the shape of a mosque.

By the end of the seventh century, the concept of congregational mosques also known as *Masjid-e-Jami* or *Jama Masjid* took a formal shape and their functions and typology were also formalised. The term *Masjid-e-Jami* means

⁷ K. Birth, op. cit., p. 15.

⁸ M. Hattstein, *Islam: Art and Architecture*, Konemann Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, France 2000, p. 40.

'the mosque of the community' was a space for the collective particularly for all male Muslims in an open space which also expressed as Friday mosque. Markus Hattstein, in his book *'Islam: Art and Architecture'* has also mentioned that the building and upkeep of mosque was the responsibility of the state, because its primary motive was the maintenance of the cohesion of the community of the faithful. With this motive and with the emergence of new Muslim countries, the mosques flourished beyond being mere places of worship.

Masjid-e Jahan Numa in Delhi (India) before A.D 1857

The foundation of Jama Masjid was laid down on 10th of Shawwal, 1060 A.H. (6th of October 1650 A.D.) under the supervision of *wazir* (Prime Minister), Saadullah Khan and *khansaman* (head of Shahjahan's household establishment), Fazil Khan at the cost of ten lacs of rupees.⁹ It was placed on a hill called '*Bhojla Pahari*' and was a thousand yards away from the palace-fortress, the Red Fort of the Mughal Empire in their newly established capital, Shahjahanabad. Bernier, a French physician and traveller who visited Delhi in 1659 A.D noticed that "the back of the Masjid was cased over to the height of the rock with large hewn stones which hide inequalities and gave a noble appearance to the building."¹⁰ According to Carr Stephen the Masjid was a specimen of the Byzantine Arabic style;¹¹ its length and width is about 261 feet long and 90 feet wide and its roof is surmounted by three domes decorated with stripes of black and white marble. There is also a marble square tank in the centre of Masjid, which was about 15 yards in length and 12 yards in width, that was used for ablution (*wudu*) by the Muslim worshippers before their prayers.

Jama Masjid has three gates; northern, southern and eastern, of which the eastern gate was the *Shahi* gate meant only for the Emperor, who came in procession with the princes, the nobles and their retinue from the Red Fort every Friday and on *Eid* days. The northern gate of the Masjid was inhabited by stalls kept by cooks, bakers, story tellers etc. To the northern side of the Jama Masjid was the Imperial Dispensary called *Dar-ul-Shifa* and to the south was the Imperial College called *Dar-ul-Baqa*. Though both of these

⁹ I. Khan, *Shah Jahan Nama*, eds. W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai, Delhi, Oxford University Press, Oxford–New York 1990, p. 530.

¹⁰ F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire 1656–1668*, Low Price Publications, Delhi 1934, p. 85.

¹¹ S. Carr, *The Archaeological and Monumental Remains of Delhi*, Aryan Books International, New Delhi 1876, p. 144.

structures were in a dilapidated state before the uprising of 1857; however, they were completely demolished after an uprising by the colonial authorities along with the *madrassa* (school) that was adjacent to this masjid for being the symbols of the former royalty attached to them.

The Masjid was known by two names, the first being the royal one bestowed by the Emperor '*Masjid-i-Jahan Numa*', of which '*Jahan*' means 'world' and '*Numa*' means visible, signifying figuratively a structure that commands the view of the whole world. The second name '*Jama Masjid*' meaning 'collective or congregational masjid' emerged out of social consciousness of the people which eventually became more popular than the first name. The congregational masjid was considered to be a closed structure at the time of a prayer where people remained dissociated from the larger external world. It was considered a structure without class barriers and distinctions, a structure emanating solidarity and brotherhood among the *qaum* (community).¹² In the same manner, the centrality of a congregational masjid, the Jama Masjid in the social life of the populace of Shahjahanabad was also an established fact. It was more than a place for prayer. It formed the locus of urban community life of Shahjahanabad and was a place for meeting; also a variety of relationships could get cemented within and through this structure and its epigraphic programme. Equally important were its political functions as a place where the *khutba* (Friday sermon) was read and legitimacy accorded to the ruling emperor.

Being an architectural masterpiece, it was considered a *padshahi* (sovereign) masjid which symbolised the imperial aura, authority and ideology in Shahjahanabad. Expert craftsmen were called to construct this noble structure not only from India but also from other countries like Arabia, Persia, Turkestan and Europe. The structure is a commendation to the engineering skills of Shahjahan's reign with great proportioned and symmetrical works. This is the largest masjid in India and was the only structure in the city with the mass and presence to challenge the pre-eminence of the palace-fortress.

British policies in the City of Delhi before and after the uprising of 1857

Places of worship under the custodianship of any State are targeted by the regime that replaces it. Similarly, the reuse of the pillaged material like pillars, columns and carvings has also been a well-known phenomenon or a tool of establishing new political might. Following somewhat the similar

¹² M. Juneja, *Architecture in Medieval India: Forms, Contexts, Histories*, Permanent Black, New Delhi 2001, p. 81.

historical pattern, the city of Delhi was taken over by the British Colonial State in 1803 in a *de facto* manner while the Mughal emperor remained the ritual imperial head. This diarchy provided enough space to the East India Company to expand its base in civil society. The efforts like repair of the abundant canal, waterworks, undertaking repair and even renovation of the Mughal Masjid were the attempts through which the Colonial authorities were trying to give a message that they are in a process of replacing 'the Mughal authority' in an altogether different manner.

This phase of 'camaraderie' came to an abrupt end during the uprising of 1857. The British authority was totally uprooted from the city of Delhi where their families were butchered to death by the rebels/sepoy. When British authority was restored in mid-September 1857, a reign of terror was unleashed against the people of the city. The Muslim population was specifically targeted as the British perceived the uprising of 1857 as a 'Muslim conspiracy' against them. Consequently, numerous masjids in the city of Delhi were demolished, leaving no trace of their existence. Various options were discussed in higher official circles as far as the fate of the Jama masjid was concerned. Plans ranging from its demolition to converting it into a Church or a more 'secular' college, floated in the bureaucracy. But finally, the plan to make it as a barracks for the Sikh soldiers from Punjab, who in turn deliberately desecrated its sanctity by undertaking prohibited activities was passed.

After this initial plan of action/reaction, the Colonial state tried to use this Masjid as a monument to bargain with and to win over the support of the Muslim citizenry of Delhi. Over the period of time we find enough data from the Colonial records at the National Archives of India and Delhi State Archives which indicate that the slow process through which the masjid was returned to the Muslims was not spontaneous and smooth but it was a protracted and a well calculated move by the Colonial administrators to make it as an object of their bargain with the Muslim community and to perpetuate control over the management of the Masjid.

The colonial administration and the Masjid after the uprising of 1857

This masjid remained a locus for the inhabitants of Shahjahanabad (present old Delhi) for the subsequent two centuries, serving not only as a religious space but also a social space where people would gather in large numbers barring any class distinctions. In such an inclusive setting, political and intellectual issues of the city were largely discussed within the premises of this

masjid. This masjid in a way was the breeding ground of the social, political and identity consciousness of the people of Delhi right from its inception. This Masjid continued to evoke communitarian and religious sentiments of the people of the city even as it witnessed the capture of Delhi by Lord Lake in 1803 A.D.

During the uprising of 1857, like all other buildings of the city—religious and secular—Jama Masjid too had to face the tyranny of the post-mutiny apathy at the hands of the British. The 1857 rebellion was perceived by the British to be masterminded by the Muslims of the city and they believed that the *ulama* of the city had a special role to play in the uprising of 1857. For this reason, this Masjid became the symbol of the religious class of the city and especially of the *ulama* of the city for whom Jama Masjid was a centre of piety and their religious and intellectual traditions. As a result, during this period after the city's recapture by the British, all the Masjids in the city of any significance were confiscated by the Colonial State and religious prayers were stalled.

Other smaller Masjids of the city were still spared from the proposal of being demolished by the British but Jama Masjid, having become the symbol of the rebel *ulama*, was time and again considered to be demolished. However, the idea that at least the Jama Masjid should be demolished as a symbol of the British victory was abandoned and it was felt that there was a need for some other symbolic actions.¹³ As a result of the conscious policy of insulting the emotions of the Muslim inhabitants, the British soldiers danced inside the Jama Masjid and Sikhs lit victory fires close to the Masjid's holy *mihrab* (lectern from where the Imam leads the prayer).¹⁴ It became the cantonment of the European guards and the Sikh regiment of the Colonial army. Along with Jama Masjid the other magnificent public buildings which became the barracks of the European guards were *Diwan-e-Aam* (hall of Public audience), *Diwan-e-Khas* (hall of private audience) and *Eidgah* (congregational masjid which was used specially for *Eid* prayers usually located at the outskirts of Delhi). On the other hand one of the British officials, Lord Canning, was prepared to make concession to the Hindus, when he argued that 'small temples' which were within the area to be cleared for the stay of the soldiers be allowed to remain.¹⁵

¹³ M. Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth Century Delhi*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2013, p. 288.

¹⁴ W. Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty*, Penguin Books, Delhi 1857, p. 384.

¹⁵ N. Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires 1803–1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1981, p. 28.

In the following years of the stay of the soldiers inside the Jama Masjid, arose several contestations regarding the convenient stay of the soldiers, which was against the basic tradition of the mosque. This can be substantiated by the letter of the former chief engineer of the Punjab asking the former Chief Commissioner of the Punjab for the removal of the ablution tank, which was located at the centre of the square of the Jama Masjid at Delhi for the conveniences of drilling the thirteenth Punjab infantry that was quartered there. In reply to this, chief Commissioner of Punjab wrote on 11th November, 1858, that he could not authorize this measure as the Government did not intend to appropriate the Jama Masjid permanently.¹⁶ The Chief Commissioner was averse to the continued occupation of the masjid by the colonial troops and he desired to relocate the troops to another place, as for him the continued occupation of a religious place was objectionable.¹⁷ Permanent occupation of the Masjid could not have been rightly proposed for the fear of invoking anger of the remaining Muslim population of the city. Hence, there was a power play at work by the colonial state to play with the sentiments of the Muslims and create a demoralising effect in them by threatening them from time to time to demolish the masjid or to block the arches or to break the ablution tank.

Consequently, several proposals ranging from the permanent occupation of the masjid by the troops to converting it into Delhi College¹⁸ or others wanted that a Christian cathedral to be built in its place came up from time to time and became the subjects of diverse debates within the colonial bureaucracy, but these suggestions were not materialized. The British troops stationed in Delhi having earlier faced a military encounter with the rebels had their own anguish against the ex-King and everything that symbolised his rule that included the city of Shahjahanabad, its landscape, its buildings—especially mosques and madrasas—and also its people. Bringing Delhi and its People to dust seemed their prime motive. Hugh Chichester, one of the military officers stationed at Delhi after the revolt wrote in his letter:

¹⁶ Delhi State Archives, 1858, 5, Commissioner Vol. II, "Restoration of Jama Masjid to the Muhammadans", A letter from the then chief engineer of the Punjab to the then Chief Commissioner of Punjab.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ For the history of this college see: A. Haqq, *Marhum Dihli Collegel*, Delhi 1989 (reprint); M. Pernau, *The Delhi College. Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1857*, Oxford University Press, Delhi 2006.

There are several mosques in the city most beautiful to look at, but I should like to see them all destroyed. The rascally brutes desecrated our churches and graveyards and I do not think we should have any regard for their stinking religion...¹⁹

Charles Raikes, another military officer had other plans for the this mosque, where he wanted the Jama Masjid to be saved, but converted into a church, each stone of it should be named after a Christian martyr that would continue to remind the people of the city about the supremacy of the British.²⁰ This was their attempt to commemorate their victory through this monument in the memory of the inhabitants of Delhi. In fact to flatten Delhi to grounds was a well-planned campaign on the part of the British officers and the same campaign was also being popularised in the local English magazines of the time such as *Lahore Chronicle*, where the editorial articles initiated the campaign of deserting Delhi to dust. Moreover, such magazines also brought out the mood of the local English people towards Delhi, its ex-King, and also its people. In reply to the editorial of this magazine which initiated the campaign to bring Delhi to dust, one of the readers wrote to the editor:

Having just seen your issue of the 18th instant, in which you most properly, as in most of your late issues, uphold the necessity for the destruction of Delhi 'in toto' and no sparing of the Jumma Masjid etc for fear of offending the Moslem, I consider it a duty to my country, as it should be of all Englishmen, to assist you in the national cry of a "A bloody revenge" and "Down with Delhi."²¹

Converting Jama Masjid to Delhi College were not merely practical or administrative steps, in effect it signifies the attempts of the British to negate the religiosity and piety attached to the building and impose a 'secular' character to the building, hence manipulating the social memories attached to it. There is a letter which proves this fact from A. H. L. Fraser, Secretary of Government of India to the Chief Secretary of Government of Punjab stating that the Jama Masjid was not only a popular place of worship for Muhammadans (Muslims), but was also undoubtedly a great national monument. Before the Mutiny when it was in the hands of the King of Delhi and was exclusively under Muhammadan control, it was open to all comers subject to

¹⁹ Letters of Hugh Chichester, letters to his father, Delhi, 24th September 1857, cited from W. Dalrymple, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

²⁰ *Ibidem.*

²¹ *Ibidem.*

no restriction. Since then it has remained an object of interest to visitors from all parts of the world.²² A. A. Roberts, an official who had worked in Delhi in the 1840s did not want the Masjid to be returned to the Muslims: "Let us keep them as tokens of our displeasure towards the blinded fanatics..."²³ However, giving the Masjid back to the Muslims was also one of the proposals, but in the immediate circumstances this idea was against their political agenda. The restoration was not only an administrative or a political issue, in fact for the British, Jama Masjid symbolised their 'lost' prestige. And restoring the same to the Muhammadans meant a further blow to their already feeble prestige after the revolt of 1857 among the indigenuous population.

They wanted to play with the basic religious identity of the Muslims through this Masjid. This can further be substantiated by a letter from Financial Commissioner for the Punjab to the Secretary of the Punjab Government in which he stated that *Jama Masjid, Eidgah* and the tombs of *Humayun* and *Safdarjung* and apart from these several other buildings should from then on be considered as State buildings.²⁴ He also opined that under any circumstances neither Jama Masjid nor the Eidgah would be restored to the Muhammadans. He intended to make them as grand but silent monuments of the success, which was conferred on them in September 1857. He made the episode of confiscation a matter of dignity and a token of displeasure towards the blinded fanatics as he believed that these blinded fanatics along with their bigoted King conspired in the Masjids for British failure. On moral, political and religious grounds he argued that no Muhammadan should ever be permitted to enter the Jama Masjid and worship there again. He stated that there were several Masjids within the city and in its suburbs which were sufficient for their worship and would supply their demands without affecting the prestige of British. He recommended that none of the state places of worship be ever restored to the Muslim population and asked civil and military officers to orchestrate measures for removing the troops from the Jama Masjid to more suitable residences and when the Masjid be vacated it would convert into Delhi College.²⁵ This letter proves the fact that the British tried to demolish the sanctity and piousness of the religious insti-

²² Delhi State Archives, Commissioner, 1895, 77, Vol. II, "Jama Masjid Rules".

²³ C.C.O, F. 238-Vol. II/1858, Financial Commissioner to Secretary, Government of Punjab, No. 899.

²⁴ Delhi State Archives, 5/1858, Commissioner, Vol. II, "Restoration of Jama Masjid to Muhammadans".

²⁵ Ibidem.

tutions of the city as well as to destroy the religious emotions and sentiments of the inhabitants of the city to propagate their agenda of 'desacralization' of the buildings of Delhi.

Debates were held in the Jama Masjid in the 1860s between the *maulvis* and the Christian missionary society. These debates were not prohibited by the Resident as were the lectures of *wahabi* leader Shah Mohammad Ismael.²⁶ Son of Shah Waliullah, a veteran scholar, Shah Abdul Aziz declared that "in this city the *Imam-al-Muslimin* wields no authority, while on the other hand the decrees of the Christian leaders are obeyed without fear."²⁷ Muslim notables and Muslim inhabitants of the city petitioned the colonial state on the occasion of the viceroy's visit to Delhi in 1860 A.D. and requested for the restitution of the Masjid and to allow them to resume prayers in the Masjid.²⁸ It was also done to cease the 'impure' practices that became common in the vicinity of this 'pious' establishment. The petitions were not considered favourable by the colonial administrators as they claimed that the signatures on the petitions were forged. They also claimed that if any time 'respectable Muhammadans' of Delhi would ask for the restoration of the Jama Masjid and were equipped 'to make proper arrangements for keeping it in repair,' their request could be granted and the Masjid would be restored to the Muhammadans.²⁹

Episodic developments in the restoration of the Masjid to the 'muslim community'

In order to protect this monument and also to protect the memories of a golden bygone era, the Muslim community continued to petition the British Government to return the monument under their custody and to restore prayers in it. Consequently, after three years in 1860, the Government of Punjab wrote to Commissioner Delhi Division that it was considered desirable that the Government should interfere in the regulation of the Masjid as little as possible and only through the managing committee.³⁰

²⁶ N. Gupta, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 27.

²⁸ National Archives of India, Foreign Part A, April 1860, 259-262, "Proposed restoration of the Jama Masjid at Delhi to the Muhammadans".

²⁹ Delhi State Archives, Deputy Commissioners Office, 1860, 11, Vol. I, "Restoration to Muhammadans of the Jama Masjid".

³⁰ Ibidem.

An *Ikrarnamah* or agreement was then signed on 26th November, 1862, between the ten members as managers of the Jama Masjid Managing Committee, who signed the petition, and the British administration, while embracing the following points:³¹

1. The committee's representatives took responsibility that there should be no disturbances, disagreements or quarrels within the Masjid premises.
2. If any question should arise in connection with the Masjid or religion they will state it privately between themselves.
3. No act should be committed inside the Masjid which may tend to show contempt of or disloyalty to the Government. If any such thing took place and which might be beyond their power to check or control, they should bring it to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner.
4. They would do repairs to the buildings of the Masjid, whenever it was necessary to do so and should keep up regular accounts of shop rents and of the endowed property.
5. If a vacancy was caused among the managers for any reason they would appoint successor by agreement among themselves.
6. If anything done or committed contrary to the wishes of the Government, they recognized that the Government should be at liberty at all times to close the Masjid or make other arrangements for its management.

There is no information in the sources available as to how the members of the Managing Committee were appointed. The observation that they were "elected by the majority of the *Musalman* inhabitants"³² can hardly be understood in the sense of a formalized electoral procedure. The British consulted those people whom they considered suitable representatives of the Muslim community, but we find no records and sources available for these discussions. Mirza Ilahi Bakhsh who was an ally of the British in the uprising of 1857 became the chairman of the managing committee. According to Margrit Pernau, before the managing committee was established the Masjid's administration was regulated by the *mutawallis*, but later with the managing committee it worked as a kind of collective *mutawalli*. The Masjid was then returned to the inhabitants on 28th November, 1862 A.D., by the colo-

³¹ Ibidem. Translation of original agreement entered into which the Managers of the Jama Masjid, Delhi, dated 26 November, 1862.

³² Delhi State Archives, Delhi Commissioner Office, 1860, 11, "Restoration to Muhammadans of the Jama Masjid, Rules for the Custody of the Jama Masjid".

nial state with the employment of several rules and regulations to be followed by the worshippers. The rules were not favourable to them as the European officers and gentlemen, civil and military were allowed to enter without a pass and not required to take off their shoes while entering the Masjid. They were also allowed to take their dogs inside this pious structure. It was followed by several petitions from the managing committee to revise these rules and regulations which made this Masjid a site of contest. Finally, the revised rules were hung up at the gate of Jama Masjid in Persian and English, which were as follows:³³

1. No one is permitted to remain in the Masjid at night except the appointed *Khadim*, the *Muazzin* and individuals specially authorized by the managing committee.
2. European officers, gentlemen and ladies are required before entering the Masjid to put on coverings provided by the committee at the door over their shoes.
3. European soldiers are not allowed to enter without a pass from the district/brigade officer or the commanding officer.
4. Non-Musalman Asians were not allowed to enter the Masjid without a pass from the Deputy Commissioner or from the managing committee. The *darwans* will indicate where such passes can be obtained.
5. No smoking is allowed in the Masjid. Visitors were forbidden to bring inside the Masjid: dogs, Hukkas, musical instruments, bottles of liquor or any other article prohibited by Musalman doctrine within the Masjid. A drunk person is also prohibited from entering. It was expected by the European ladies and gentlemen that they would observe the religious etiquettes of the Masjid. Persons who desired to take a photograph within the Masjid must obtain special permission from the managing committee.
6. Visitors must not pass or stand in front of Muhammadans engaged in prayer and are required to remain in the eastern portion of the Masjid during the hour of prayer.
7. No benches or chairs can be taken into the Masjid without the special permission of the managing committee and if any are taken in without permission, they must be removed as soon as the ceremony for which they were allowed has ended.

³³ Delhi State Archives, Commissioner Office, 1858, 5, Vol. II, "Restoration of Jama Masjid to the Muhammadans".

8. No religious discussion is allowed in the Masjid nor is any assemblage allowed except for the purpose of prayer. Preaching in Masjid is forbidden except with the permission of the managing committee.
9. Two constables will be detained for duty at the north and south gates that will be responsible for seeing that the above rules are observed.

Conclusion

The main objective of this paper was to study the change in the treatment that a Masjid got from the two different ruling powers—the outgoing Mughal rule and the upcoming Colonial rule—the one being its patron and originator and the other being its executioner. The focus in the paper remained on the colonial archival material pertaining to this mosque as it was through this documentation, though ironically, the memory of the confiscation of this monument still persists as the contemporary Urdu literature hardly mentions this incident, perhaps due to the fear of persecution. The basic theoretical premise of this paper lies in the proposition that the study of any building should not be done only in terms of its architecture or utility, but also in the context of the history of the political situations that shaped the very existence and survival of that building. What is important here is to understand first that any building if considered in its material terms is nothing but an artful amalgamation of bricks, mortar and sandstone, but what makes it important and eternal is the cultural interpretation of these buildings and the social memories cultivated around such buildings by the societies over time.

The perceptions, notions, emotions and memories that are attached to them in the course of time and the human reaction that these buildings can generate are all marked by historical occurrences. They are culturally constructed, bearing direct interference from the contemporary state and power centres. As the centres of power shift from one regime to another regime, these perceptions and the memories attached to them are altered.

To trap this shift was the key consideration behind the decision to use the building of *Masjid-e Jaha Numa* or *Jama Masjid* of Delhi to tell the story of how the mosques in India survived with the transfer of power from the Mughals to the Colonial rule. This has provided a varied and layered history of this monument beginning from the sacred identity of it as the *Masjid-e Jahanuma* or *Jama Masjid* to an architectural marvel celebrated by art historians to a symbol through which the Muslim community was disciplined and controlled in the aftermath of the uprising of 1857.

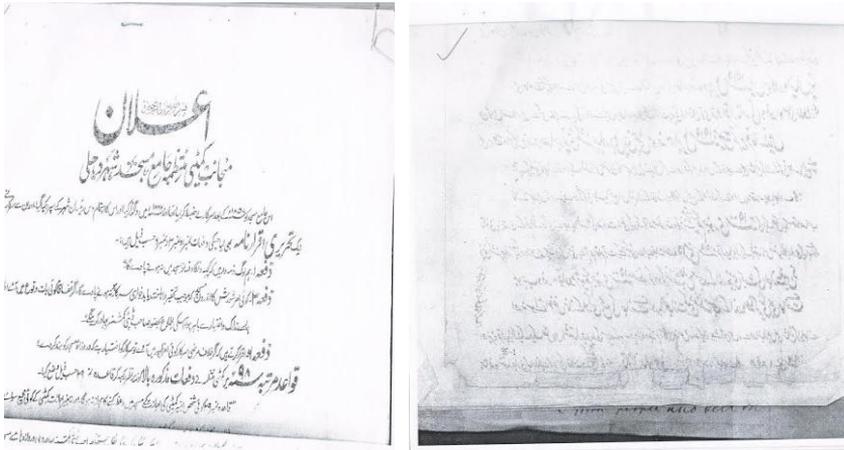


Fig. 1. Declaration by the Managing Committee regarding the restoration of Jama Masjid.
 Courtesy: File No. 11/1860, Deputy Commissioner Vol. I, Delhi State Archives

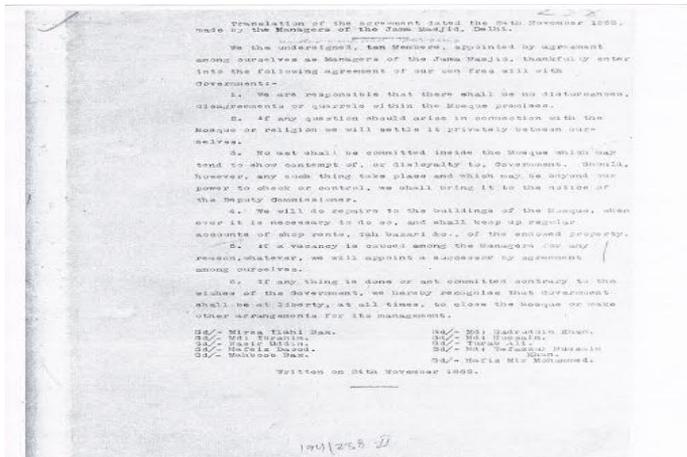


Fig. 2. Translation of the original agreement in English language made by the managers of Jama Masjid managing committee dated 24th November, 1862.
 Courtesy: File No. 11/1860, Deputy Commissioner Vol. I, Delhi State Archives

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