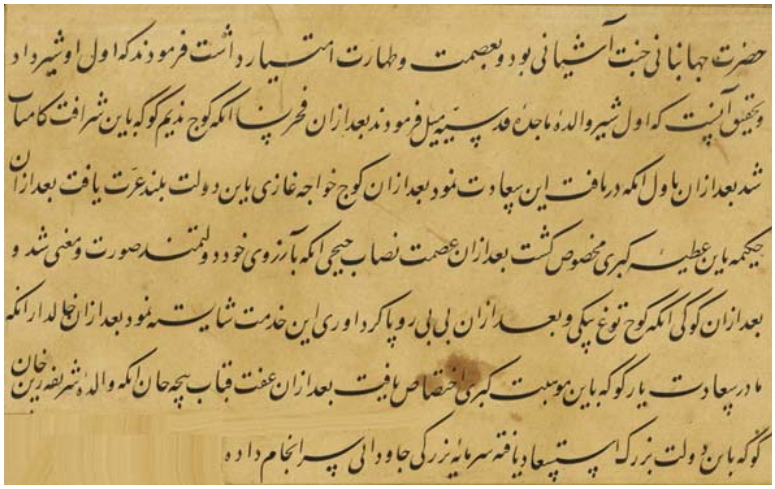
KINSHIP STRUCTURES AND FOSTER RELATIONS IN ISLAMIC SOCIETY

Milk Kinship Allegiance In The Mughal World



Inscription adapted from the Mughal Miniature Painting — The infant Akbar placed in the care of his nurses by his mother Maryam Makani, British Library *Akbar Nama*, MS Or.12988, fol. 20v — attests several nurses breastfeeding the infant Akbar.

Kinship Structures and Foster Relations in Islamic Society

Milk Kinship Allegiance in the Mughal World

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Illustrations

To My Father

Wet nurse is a mother to me in whose lap I had been brought up from infancy, I have not so much affection for my own mother as for her. She is to me my gracious mother, and I hold her children as my own brothers and children.

Emperor Jahangir in his memoirs, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*

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This research originally grew out of an interest in some of the more recondite areas of the socio-anthropology of the Islam, concerning kinship in particular, and it was the works of Professor Peter Parkes, University of Kent, and Dr Morgan Clarke, University of Oxford, that provided illumination into how I might make my own contribution. I am heavily indebted to both of them for their encouragement and assistance at various stages. There are many more individuals who have taken an interest in my subject and have helped me by reading parts of my manuscript in different forms, providing me with references, inviting me to give seminars or guiding me to new literature. I would like to give special thanks to Professor Peter Ronald deSouza, then the Director at IIAS, Professor Laxman Thakur, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla and to Dr Archana Verma, now at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am grateful to IIAS Librarian Mr Ramesh Chand and his staff for their outstanding service. They were always ready to chase the most obscure references. Visits to British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and a visit to USA, expressly to study Mughal miniature paintings that portray the 'nurses interacting with Mughal princes' were supported respectively from the Indian Council of Historical Research and the University Grants Commission, both in New Delhi. I am thankful to the British Library Board, London and Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris for giving me permission to reproduce miniature paintings in this book. I owe tremendous thanks to anonymous reviewers who read the manuscript in its entirety and made excellent suggestions. I am truly grateful to my wife, one of my most intellectual companions, for helping me to organize my materials and putting all the fishing touches on the manuscript. Finally, particular thanks are due to everyone at IIAS for bringing the book to publication. Working with Dr Debarshi Sen, publication officer at IIAS, has been a distinct pleasure. None of the above is in any way responsible for anything mistaken or ill-judged that the reader might find here.

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Prologue

In recent years, new kinship theories have invigorated the argument that kinship cannot be understood as biologically embedded social relations, but social relations of belonging often articulated by metaphors coming from the biological arena. As kinship relations that are not necessarily grounded upon biological relations, Islamic milk tie and 'fosterage' – that 'denotes the relationship between a child and a foster community' – comparable with consanguinity, seem to be good example to test the validity of that argument. The present work is an endeavour to be acquainted with the notion of milk kinship – in which 'communion of flesh and blood may be established after birth in a way not merely symbolic' (Smith 1885:175-76) – invented as a social-political tool in Islamic society, where, in general, motherhood is glorified, childlessness is socially unacceptable, and adoption is religiously prohibited. The study focuses on varied facets of milk kinship in comparison with its 'theological' implications and intrinsic link to allegiance fosterage, juxtapose, signify the methods historians necessitate to adopt in recapturing the life of civilization and a range of societal practices of Medieval and early Modern Period. It is also intended to exhibit how the Muslim experiences of socio-political Islam within aeon and area of sixteenth-sevententh century Mughals India espoused – contrary to entrenched surmise – continuities with less difference with Islamic power elsewhere. Deploying a variety of medieval sources, I here suggest that Muslim political power in India during this period scarcely developed novel structured forms of governance that were 'all its own'. This work is an attempt in that direction: it seeks to pull into one narrative aspect of the

subcontinent's medieval Islamic polity and society, its standards and manifold realities, which have hitherto been treated as discrete.

To expand a little on the above, such as political allegiances in the course of cliental fosterage, which was a regular practice of urban-sedentary Arabs in the seventh-century – evidenced in the biography of the infant prophet Muhammad who was sent shortly after his birth to be nursed and raised to childhood by Bedouin clients of the Banu Sa'd desert branch of the Quraysh tribe – were also employed in the emerging caliphates of Islam and were apparent characteristics of many Muslim states up to Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal times. The relationship i.e., milk kinship thus developed between the nurse and nursling was intrinsically linked to allegiance fosterage being used to establish reciprocal claims on loyalty and support. Within Mughals literatures, we find the sentiment that milk brothers (*kokahs*) who shared the same breast milk had a closer relationship and a greater sense of loyalty to each other than they did to their biological brothers. The princes in imperial culture as grew young came to view their biological siblings as political rivals and potential murderers, but their *kokahs* were for all intents and purposes true 'brothers'. We find the following reaction in Mughals histories (for e.g., Gulbadan Begam 1983:201): [Sibling] is no brother! This is ... majesty foe! Mughal Emperor Akbar (r.1556-1605) refused to inflict punishment on his *kokah* when he proved troublesome and contumacious by saying: 'between me and *kokah* [Aziz] there is a stream of milk (*juh- i shir*) which I cannot cross' (Motamad Khan 1865:230-31; Shah Nawaz Khan 1888-91, Vol.I: 675). Emperor Aurangzeb's (r.1658-1707) youngest son Kam Bakhsh had offered to sacrifice his life for the sake of his *kokah* to whom Emperor sought to penalize for killing royal eunuch (Musta'idd Khan 1871: 398-400; Manucci 1965[1907], Vol.II:466). Notwithstanding the milk mother's status, ties of love and affection established at the breast between a prince

and his milk mother/or *angah* run deep. Emperor Jahangir (r.1605-1627), in his memoirs *Tuzuk-i- Jahangiri* (1968: 78-85), avows the following sentiments: 'wet nurse or milk mother is a mother to me in whose lap I had been brought up from infancy, I have not so much affection for my own mother as for her. She is to me my gracious mother, and I hold her children as my own brothers and children'. According to Akbar's panegyrist Shaikh Abul Fazl (1873-87, Vol.I: 43), a milk mother was not requisite to supply merely plentiful milk, it required to be a conduit for her necessarily good temperament and spiritual inclinations. Interpreted as a different form of the mother's blood aligned on Greek medical thought, breast milk was seen to transmit not only nourishment but also central traits of nurse character. Therefore, the team of wet nurses was prudently picked. As wet nurse to royal sons, nurses were well positioned to win the imperial family's affection and favour; and she succeeded in parlaying her proximity to the royal family into financial security and social status. Comparable to Egyptian, Greek and Roman cultures, the nurse's family held a recognized hereditary status of 'kinship by milk' and when the nursed 'child' finally assumed the throne, his milk fathers (*atgahs*) and milk brothers (*kokahs*) often attained considerable influence and position at his court.

Medievalists have in point of fact very little material – limited almost exclusively to sources of a normative-theoretical character – with which to study past attitudes, modes of thought and feeling, particularly where intimate familial matters are concerned. In essence, anthropology, in the way it has revealed some of the cultural meanings of Islamic civilization in the context of contemporary societies, can sensitize historians to questions they do not normally ask of the source materials within their field (Hareven 1971: 414), and could help them to apply the data from the past concepts elaborated in the study of contemporary societies. Predominantly imperative for historical researches are anthropological observations such as various

'power structure' that found their expression in varied structures for instance of 'kinship' and the practices contiguous to it. While the relationship of history with anthropology has been contradictory and conflicting — both have danced a flirtatious *pas de deux* throughout the past century — conversely, at different times and in distinct locations, important practitioners of these bodies of knowledge have accentuated their key convergence, highlighting the necessity of crossing borders and straddling boundaries that separate them. Recent times in actual fact too have witnessed profound changes in the practice of anthropology, sociology, and history. Among the major motivations for these transformations have been increasingly heightened emphases on the place of 'process', 'practice', and 'power' — in understanding social worlds. In actual elaborations of such emphases and understandings, a key role has been played by the acute intersection between anthropology and history. This renovation has brought together as apparently perceptible in present work the process of history and of culture and society as part of mutual analytical fields. Professor Bernard Cohn – whose writings in this terrain are a source of intellectual substance for me — was one of the pioneering scholars whose writings showed unmistakable signs of a rapprochement in this respect.

The work thus contemplates on a set of relatively detailed narratives of the juridical reckoning and symbolic elaboration of Islamic milk kinship, which I argue needs to be comprehended in terms of its attested usage as an institution of clientage. All the same, the early and medieval Islamic texts additionally permit us to analyze milk kinship as an instrument of social and political practices that too encompass less visible forms of kin organization, in which women were far more important than in the agnatic lineage or the patrilineage. As we come better to appreciate the matrilineal ties, Mughals women appear somewhat less marginalized, and their experiences a little less harsh, than generally presented. Nevertheless, in the

end, I again remain intensely conscious of the picture thus presented that the position of the Mughals women in a society dominated by the male fellowships tends to be a bleak. The study admits analysis and interpretation at several levels. How were wet nurses chosen? What were the ties among milk parents, milk children, and blood parents like? What was the value of kinship rules and how were they deployed? What was the tangible strength and stance of Mughal state like processes of administration where competition for political power throughout was normally a struggle among groups each with a strong house organization rather than individuals? Interestingly, the personal and official duties and relationships of the extended ruling family and their assistants were not yet as piercingly distinguished and specificed as later in the colonial nation state. The state and royal families were often closely intertwined**.** The Mughal court (*durbar*) in that sense was the central organ of the whole state administration that combined distinct functions as it had at earlier stages of development of the state when centralization was less complete. The study argumentatively dispels the various myths surrounding the history of Mughal state and society, and proposes a new understanding of the nature and formation of the state. In the early and middle age, kinship indeed was the most widely used mode of conceiving social relations and linking individuals into very diverse groups.

Unlike the previous century's authors of medieval Indian history, with few exceptions – who were in the habit of discussing activities of the elite only – historians are now making efforts to escape the bonds of those normative and glorying sources to analyze the political roles and activities of the non-elite bulk of the population. Studies are being made of the 'functioning' of the system contrary to its 'structure'. The emperor is seen as one element among many in a socio-political system, not as simply a despot or autocrat ruling without limitations. Indeed, during the past twenty years or so,

historians' understanding of medieval India – the period otherwise ascribed parallel to a Jurgen Habermas' form of 'the representative publicness' (1998:5-7), wherein, as he clarifies, 'public sphere' as a space for publicity was non-existent and the 'public domain' was appropriated by the ruling power for the display of their status, dignity and authority – has undergone considerable refinement, thanks to a greater openness toward the questions and insights of new discipline, especially sociology, social anthropology and historical ethnology.

In recent times, historians are engrossed in what have been called 'ideas of structural relativity' that is, of dynamic relationship of social entities moving within a defined structural whole. Too often historians have seen medieval Indian politics and 'public sphere' as being limited to the so-called patricians, with the rest of the population seen as a lumpish, undifferentiated mass. My central aim, which runs throughout the work, is to juggle around with the traditional dichotomy between state and society and to approach the state and society in a discrete way – in terms of the decentralized and distributed power found in-and-out of professed refined orders. The present work as a consequence gives rise to an alternative picture of Mughals India in which the process of 'kinship' relations determined the size, scale, and degree of centralization of the political power. Viewing the state as a form of social relation rather than a central structure avoids the evolutionist dichotomy between state and society.

As other societies used mechanisms such as adoption and god-parenthood when they wanted to create legal pseudo-familial relations with certain people or groups outside the original framework of kinship, Islam emphasized the importance of milk relationships. The majority of instances of milk kinship cited in *hadith* traditions served so as to broaden the network of relatives on whom one could rely for assistance and cooperation. In dynastic societies, it was atypical that man would fully trust his biological relatives who invariably turned

rivals to the throne as single lineage were in competition for ownership and imperial patronage – whereas, milk relatives remained a significant mechanism of political, social and poignant allegiances. The ties between throne and milk were hierarchical, encompassing and binding.They were not eligible for the same offices as their wards, though they stood to gain power prestige through the successes of their charges. Precise emphasis of present work is on the role of milk relatives in court culture and politics of the Mughal empire and the corollary reflections gyrate around the concepts of F.W. Buckler 'corporate kingship' (1985) vis-à-vis Nobert Elias (1969) and Rita Costa Gomes' (2003) 'court society' in which all the [subordinate] were 'members' rather than servants, contrary to the concept of 'elite methodologies and subaltern materials' espoused by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her *Mahasweta Devi's Satandayani* (1987:91-135). It is argued that the creation of co-lactation or bilateral milk kinship arrangements was a significant mechanism for the creation of lasting multi-stranded exchange relationships between people of unequal status. In such relationship rather than wages wet nurse was given 'gifts and presents' for her services. Seemingly, it put the nurses in a position of being the recipients, rather than the givers—a position of strength in a society where patron-client relationships abound.This work will first provide an overview of ethnographic and historical literature that presents breastmilk as a constitutive substance of kinship relatedness with 'social dimension' to breastfeeding in a wide variety of cultures. It reveals that infant feeding often entails not only the physical survival of the child but also complex forms of socialisation of mother and child. Like female sexuality and childbirth it appears the subject of considerable cultural elaboration in most socities. Chapters 2 and 3 open the fundamental line of enquiry comparison of milk kinship with its 'theological' implications and intrinsic link to allegiance fosterage. Chapter 4 deduces that with the responsibilities for raising imperial princes, wet

nurses gained prestige in court and had opportunities to acquire wealth and access to the throne, which eventually translated into political power. The rights and privileges that had accrued to an emperor's wet nurse were not monopolized by any one member of her family but were diffused among a coterie of relatives. It indicates its persistence as a medium for complex social and political networks. Chapter 5 focuses particular on the notion of 'fosterage' which was not the exception but the norms in the imperial socities. Besides their political schema, they were of the opinion that biological parents were less able than foster parents to rear, nurture, and to provide a good education for their children. Both *angah* (wet nurse) and *ataliq* (guardian/tutor/surrogate father) were carefully chosen (Manucci, Vol.II:30-32; Faruqui 2012). These were from the family of men who commanded great respect – the better to rein in a delinquent prince – and were celebrated for their bravery and loyalty, as well as for their willingness to die to protect their young charges. Customarily, a powerful family of the *angah* and *ataliq* also moored a minor prince in the political locale of the time. Not surprisingly, the list of family who served at one time or another as *angahs* and *ataliq*s reads like a who's who of the imperial aristocracy. On closer inspection, it shows that social parenthood and different forms of fosterage amongst Mughals were predominantly widespread.

CHAPTER – 1

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MILK KINSHIP

The anthropology of kinship indeed is currently being expanded to encompass many kinds of familial and inter-familial connections previously excluded by its traditional focus on natal consanguinity and marital affinity. What was once marginalized as a residual category of fictive kinship or artificial kinship (even pseudo-kinship) is increasingly becoming a focal domain of contemporary kinship studies, which comprises relations by nursing, fostering, adoption, and spiritual sponsorship and, by other kinds of ritual or informal association. At the same time, the development of new reproductive technologies (*in vitro* fertilization) enables the establishment of significant relatedness to transgress previous boundaries predicated in one way or other upon biological connectedness, thus challenging further the biological link as a prerequisite for kinning, or creating a relationship. These parallel processes both reveal and create tensions between socio-cultural and biological forms of belonging – and this, in spite of knowing the difference between birth and filiations, between physical reproduction of human body and social reproduction of a human being.

A Note on Kinship Studies

The study of kinship in general tends to be associated more closely with social anthropology than with sociology. In focusing on kinship systems, anthropologists are concerned with specifying the principles which underlie the dominant

forms of kinship behaviours, commitments, and solidarities occurring within the society they are studying. Recent attempts to broaden the concept of kinship in anthropology have focused attention on a wide range of non-consanguineal ties of relatedness in diverse societies (e.g., Carsten 2000, Franklin and McKinnon 2001).[1] It has become commonplace to argue that relatedness is an increasingly acquired state that can be built over time and by non-sexual means. This dominant paradigm strives to move beyond understanding relatedness in term of a distinction between 'social' versus 'biological' relationships. In this view, 'physical' ties are not given at birth – instead, they are produced through time as a consequence of eating, living and consuming together. By dissociating the concept of kinship from biology and integrating it with the process of how persons come into being, the investigative focus shifted to ways in which kinship is embedded in the social life of the people and to its connections to aspects of culture such as religion. Proponents of this model give considerable attention to non-biogenetics kinships – where people do not usually share 'blood' or 'biological' substance – highlighting how commensality and co-residence can combine to engender consubstantial relations.

For much of the twentieth century, anthropologists had defined kinship as genealogical relatedness, that is, relationships based on consanguinity (the idea that related people share blood or biogenetics substance) and affinity (relationships forged as a result of marriage). In the 1960-70s, a debate erupted concerning what kinship study indeed is all about, and what its analytical validity is, resulting in a robust reconfiguration of kinship studies that led to separation of physical kinship from biological kinship. The cultural notions of physical procreation and consubstantiality – how people considered themselves to be related through shared physical substance, whether it was blood, or semen, or breast milk, or food – should be seen as separate from true biological facts and as cultural interpretations

of genealogical ties.[2] A major turning point in this reconfiguration of kinship study was *A Critique of the Study of Kinship* in 1984[3] by David M. Schneider, who targeted the analytical distinction between biological and social kinship, which he identified as stemming from a European and American cultural prejudice. He challenged established anthropological orthodoxies with his heretical assertion that kinship as we knew it did not exist. In essence, what had long served as a pre-eminent focus of ethnographic inquiry was little more than a reflection of Euro-American cultural assumptions taken abroad. Schneider, of course, was not alone in making this argument that the theoretical categories of Euro-American kinship study are informed and shaped by Euro-American understandings of kinship – it was previously shared in 1957 by Ernest Gellner and in 1960 by Rodney Needham. Such criticisms eventually contributed to the rejection of structural-functionalist understandings of kinship as a core social structure – espoused by A.R. Radcliff-Brown, Bronislaw Malinowaski, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, and Meyer Fortes – and allowed for more varied interpretations of the significance of kinship (as, for instance, in Leach 1966).[4] Nevertheless, Schneider's work was commendable of a broad shift within anthropology in the 1980s toward more self-critical and reflexive approaches and a rejection of the objectivist model in favour of more hermeneutical ones. Reflecting a general shift in anthropology from function to meaning, Schneider's groundbreaking study in 1968[5] on kinship in American culture analyzed 'the distinctive features which define the person as a relative', examining the American system as a symbolic system in which biological relatedness and sexual relations play a fundamental role as symbols for social relationships. By highlighting those meanings that entered into American classification of kin, Schneider 'denaturalized' kinship and revealed its inherently symbolic character. Central to Schneider's critical assessment of existing kinship theory was his insistence that anthropologists

should no longer assume that all people will regard sexual reproduction as the basis of human sociality.

Indeed, in Euro-American formulations, consanguinity has to do with the reproduction of human beings and reproduction is, in turn, implied to a sexual and biological process. Similarly, in the folk wisdom of the West, sexual reproduction creates physiological links between human beings and these are understood to have important attributes apart from any meanings that people might attach to them.[6] Schneider in actual fact challenged the universality of these genres of assumptions. In his postulations, kinship relationships are not necessarily conceptualized as an elaboration of natural processes as well as the tracing of genealogical connections. The cultural concepts of procreation vary from culture to culture that may involve critical religious elements unrelated to biological processes. The kinship studies in the 1990s have witnessed an efflorescence of works which follow Schneider's lead in challenging the universality of a belief in physical reproduction grounded in 'biology' and 'nature' as the primary basis of human kinship bonds. Many of newer works attempt to document the 'processual' nature of kinship by demonstrating that relatedness is a gradually acquired state which can be built through time and by non-physiological means. Neverthless, as Schneider clarifies (1995),[7] this shift was a part of a general shift in anthropological understanding from structure to practice, and from practice to discourse – wider recasting of the nature of social and culture life which involved the breaking down of the discrete domains of economics, politics, religion, and kinship which also had defined anthropology. This recasting occurred in conjunction with what Schneider termed a 'democratization of the intellectual enterprise' (1995)[8] in which concerns about social justice, from feminism and the civil rights movement, were crucial – social stability was no longer the central issue in anthropology. And in one way or another, the study of kinship – whether in evolutionary, functionalist, or structuralist guise –

had been further bound by explanations of social stability.

By taking a fresh look at idioms of relatedness, and to review the ways in which relationships are symbolized and interpreted in diverse societies, the newer scholarship on kinship reveals the importance of issues such as feeding and nurturing to the process of kinship. Nevertheless, they too regard blood as a substance with which a child is born and which differentiates kin. Blood as a kinship substance in that sense could be modified and transformed by ways such as breastmilk which the child ingests, and the food child eats; through the daily food cooked on the hearth of the house and that members of a household share, they all have a substance in common which has a qualities similar to blood. The present study argues that the process of nurture pertaining to 'non-biogenetic relatedness' may match or even some time supersede natal kinship, just as Islamic milk kinship (*rida'a*)[9] was supposed to create a cognation superior to that of mere flesh and blood. The important consequence of this processual conceptualization of kinship is that, for instance, birth siblings and milk siblings are not socially differentiated if they were nursed by the same woman and fed from the same hearth, because the substance that makes them related to others is considered to be the same. Janet Carsten's works in 1995 and 1997 with Malays in Southeast Asia also represent this growing trend. In an article that deals with kin connections on the Island of Langkawi (Malaysia), she writes:

> Here, I focus strictly on notions about substance and the way it is acquired through feeding. My intention is to show how bodily substance is not something with which Malays are simply born and remains forever unchanged, [but] to show how it gradually accrues and changes throughout life as person participating in relationships (1995)[10].

In a 1995 study, Marry Weismantel[11] espouses a comparable stance in her analysis of Zumbagua's relatedness. More specifically, she states:

> The physical acts of intercourse, pregnancy and birth can establish a strong bond between two adults and a child. But other adults, by taking a child into their family and nurturing its physical needs through the same substances as those eaten by the rest of the social group, can make that child a son or daughter who is physically as well as jurally their own.

The ambiance of such disposition has helped to challenge the association between parentage and physiological reproduction. Implicit in this approach is the idea that Western notion of hereditary substance can have only one antithesis, viz. substance acquired not at birth, but processually over time and as a consequence of intentional human efforts. Within this framework, drawing upon data collected from classical in comparison with contemporaneous Muslim chronicles, the 'milk kinship and fosterage' provides us with a glimpse into a world in which the breast milk bonds are not conceived in that form of conventional genealogical expressions.

Kinship in Muslim Milieu

In the debate on South Asian kinship, the subcontinent's Muslim populations apparently have been largely neglected. By the same token, works on kinship in the Islamic Middle East only marginally take account of the South Asian Muslim population.[12] Unlike most Euro-Americans, Muslims make a marked distinction between what goes into the making of a person in a physical sense and what relates them as social beings. Muslim notions of kinship have little in common with Western understanding. At this juncture, it is impossible to cover the whole range of Muslim relations and their symbolic associations within the precincts of the present discourse. I remain acutely aware of the limitations of my work and austerely focus on notions of 'substance'[13] and the way it is acquired through breastfeeding. Ever since the antiquity, breast milk is considered a 'vital element' on a par with blood thought to create fraternal bonds which have a widespread social and moral effect. The

references in *Qur'an* to milk relations apparently are based on the idea that the milk is somehow formed from the blood of the womb, while the statements in *hadith* (pronouncements of the Prophet) reports consequently too make a connection between the wet nurse's milk and her husband's semen. The mother milk indeed is seen as male substance in female form, for when copulating with his wife, her husband makes her milk from his semen. My intention is to show how bodily 'substance' is not something with which Muslims are basically born and that remains forever unchanged, but to demonstrate how it gradually accrues and changes throughout life, as persons participate in relationships. The Mughal royal princes, court and the wet nurses are in fact central to the way shared substance is conceived. In such dynastic societies, a considerable overlap between 'personal' and 'official' interests of the individual was taken for granted. Therefore, it connotes to study the nature of 'power' and the relationship between imperial sovereignty and the social networks of power to illuminate the actual functioning of the Mughal state and society. The major approaches (mainly around the military-fiscal axis) to the state to date such as 'structural-functionalist state' of the Aligarh school and the 'patrimonial-bureaucratic state' as well as the 'processual' models ordinarily isolate the state from social forces and overlook the extent of interconnectedness between state and society. Some indications can be given in the course of present study that, negotiations, forging alliances and wining allegiance were more important factors in Mughal political success than military fastidiousness.

As per centralized model, state and its relation with society were unidirectional with authority fluiding, absolutely and unilineally, from state to society not in any case vice versa. State is virtually portrayed as sequestered from the influence of its subjects. Patrimonial model says that all authority is shown to be stemming from the person of the emperor. Drawing upon Michel Foucault and many other social theorists, I surmise that authority does not derive from a single source, but is spread

across the entire social body that one could decipher it in a network of various social-political institutions. Foucault's 'strategic' approach to power underlines the role of human agency in the constitution and reproduction of power relations. His work emphasizes the need to study power as situated within an arena of social conflict and struggles.[14] It is of course true that human activity is not autonomous and free, but is continually constrained by the prevailing socio-political institutions. These institutions, in the Mughal Empire, constituted the space and the boundaries within which much of the political activity took place. It has rightly been pointed out by Thomas Watenberg in his situated conception of 'power' that no power relation is actually dyadic, for such a relationship is indeed constituted within a broader social context. Power, he says, is situated within a 'social field' and is created through 'social alignments' that go beyond the agents involved in a particular power relation.[15]

Milk Kinship Hypothesis

The substance that kin are said to share derives in a large part from their shared consumption of milk as babies. Milk feeding also makes reference to blood since, as mentioned before, human milk is believed to be produced from blood circulating in the body. In the setting of widespread fostering arrangements of different kinds, co-feeding can create shared blood, shared substance, and kinship. It is said 'if you drink the same milk, you become kin' or 'you become one blood, one flesh'. Milk feeding also defines the prime category of incestuous relations: according to Islamic prohibition, kin who have drunk milk from the breasts of the same woman may not marry. If they do marry and it later becomes known that they were breastfed by the same woman, the marriage stands annulled. While in Muslim society the custom of preferential cousin marriage has become a staple in textbook discussions, the equally rare marriage

prohibition for persons related through *rida'a* has remained a virtually unknown ethnographic fact for long.

Anthropologists have laid emphasis on breastfeeding rightly as more than a merely biological and nutritional act; it is indeed an aspect of 'mothering' the culturally constructed bonding between mother and child, grounded in specific historical and cultural practices. It is not just conditioned by cultural patterns but wields a definite influence on them. The extensive elaboration of milk kinship on analogy with natal kinship in classical Islamic texts may have ascribed to its strategic affiliative role as a substitute to jural adoption (*tabanni*) after this was proscribed by *Qur'anic* revelation. As other societies used mechanisms such as adoption and godparenthood when they wanted to create legal pseudo-familial relations with certain people or groups outside the original framework of kinship, Islam emphasized to the substance of milk relationships. A majority of manifestations of milk kinship mentioned in early *hadith* traditions served so as to widen the network of relatives on whom one could trust for help and support. Milk kinship notably needs not to be fused with the fosterage despite the fact that it is often referred to as 'fosterage'.[16] The term 'fosterage' is usually reserved for phenomena where parental roles of one or more children are temporarily taken over by different individuals or families from the children's natal families. It was usually a temporary sojourn, preferably with close or influential families to help with a child's upbringing in general sense. Because this was regarded as providing spiritual as well as physical nurture, it was frequently seen as something desirable rather than a necessary response to a situation of crisis in the original family. Fosterage does differ from the institution of adoption where the adopted child become a permanent member of the family by which it is received and is usually seen as involving a permanent alteration of status of the adoptee.[17]

Kinship and Marriage Prohibition in Islam

Islamic *shari'ya* law treats relations of kinship and alliance under the heading of 'closeness' (*qarabah*). This is then divided into three subtypes: *nasab* (relations of filiation, both agnatic and uterine); *mushara* (relations by marriage); and *rida'a* (relations by breastfeeding, 'milk kinship'). All three types of kinship in Islam involve an impediment to marriage between certain persons so related (Table-I). The milk relationship to a certain extent is restricted form of legally recognized kinship: milk kin cannot inherit from each other; milk parents have no legal duty to maintain their milk children; nor do they have any form of guardianship over them. Although for all practical purposes the milk mother herself fulfils the same role as a wet nurse in former times in Europe, it differs basically from that institution since the latter did not involve the child and the nurse in any legally recognized relationship. The rules defining the relatives of a person whom he or she may not marry are straightforward for consanguineal and affinal relatives; nevertheless, in the case of *rida'a,* the prohibition derives from the doctrine that the 'fluids' of both the lactating woman and her husband/mate generate the milk. Whereas the *Qur'an* and the *hadith* are explicit and fulsome about what exactly constituted a milk-tie but Muslim jurists have addressed this issue in a tortuous manner.[18] To simplify, Table-I, lists the relatives of the man whom he is not permitted to marry either because of a blood relationship, affinity, or a milk link.

Though conceptually defined in this way, or itemized as a list of prohibited kin, these juridical reckonings of milk kinship may seem difficult to grasp, however, they become more comprehensible once one envisages how traditional Islamic milk kinship was often instituted (discussed further in Chapter 3). Consider, for example, the infancy and early childhood of the Prophet Muhammad, who was sent shortly after birth to be nursed by Bedouin (Banu Sa'd) foster-parents. G. Stern in 1939

Table-I
Non-marriageable Relatives for Man

By Blood:	any lineal ascendant any lineal descendant any descendant of a parent any daughter of a grandparent
By Affinity:	the wife of any lineal ascendant the wife of any lineal descendant any lineal ascendant of his wife any lineal descendant of his wife (by another husband)
By Fosterage:	the milk-mother [his wet nurse] the milk-mother's lineal ascendants the milk-mother's lineal descendants a daughter of his milk-mother's grandparents the milk-mother's milk-daughter the milk-mother of a lineal ascendant the milk-sister of a lineal ascendant the milk-daughter of a female lineal ascendant the milk-daughter of a female lineal descendant the milk-daughter of a sibling a milk-sibling's daughter the milk-mother's husband's lineal ascendants the wives of a milk-mother's husband and his lineal ascendants the milk-mother's husband's lineal descendants a daughter of his milk-mother's husband's grandparents the milk-daughter of an ascendant's wife the milk-daughter of a descendant's wife his wife's milk-mother his wife's milk-mother's mother his wife's milk-mother's husband's mother his wife's milk-daughter a daughter of his wife's milk-child the wives of his wife's milk-son and his lineal descendants

refers to cases of milk kinship through infant fosterage in the Prophet's family: [19]

> 'In Makkah it was the usual custom to send a child, whether boy or girl, to foster-parents. Muhammad was first suckled by Thuwaibah, a slave of his uncle, Abu Lahab. She had previously been foster-mother to his uncle, Hamzah, and after that she acted in the same capacity to Abu Salmah bin 'Abdul-Asad, whose widow became Muhammad's wife. Later Muhammad had as foster-mother Halimah of the Banu Sa'd. Salma, the *maulah* [client] of Uqbah, is said to have served as midwife to Khadijah and to have been foster-mother to her children. Aisha was sent to foster-parents . . . '

In accumulation to his own natal family in Mecca, Muhammad thereby acquired a duplicate set of Bedouin 'milk kin'. These comprised his nurse or 'milk-mother' Halimah, together with her husband – Muhammad's 'milk-father' Al-Harith – and their own natal (and other fostered) children, the infant prophet's co-raised 'milk-brothers' and 'milk-sisters'. Likewise, Muhammad would also acquire a duplicate set of classificatory 'aunts', 'grandmothers' and 'nieces' by milk kinship: that is, Halimah's sisters, her mother, and her grand-daughters, together with her husband's equivalent kinswomen.

These milk relatives comprise the 'core range' of milk kinswomen for a male child, those whose classification with close cognatic kinswomen (defined as *mahram*) allowed a man relaxed liberties of familiar address and intimacy with women who would otherwise be secluded according to conventions of sexual honour in Islam.[20] Altorki had examined juristic definition of such impediments to marriage, comparing these with simpler folk models of fosterage followed by contemporary Saudi Arabians. Milk kinship in that sense is phrased in idioms of male proprietorship: since lactation is instigated by impregnation, it is said that 'the milk is from the man' (*al-laban li-l-fahl*). As specified in Table-2, generalization of the *rida'a* bar is not altogether accurate with *nasab*. Muslim jurists singled out those cases where there was no evenness

between blood relationships and milk relationships with regard to prohibition of marriage. For instance, as tabulated in Table-2, a man is allowed to marry the (biological) mother or the (biological) sister of his (milk) brother (provided, of course, their milk brotherhood was created by both of them having suckled from a strange woman), whereas this is not analogous to consanguinity. By the same token, a man may marry the milk sister of his biological daughter or the milk daughter of his son's milk mother, while he cannot marry his wife's biological daughter by another man.

Table-2
Contrasted Analogies of Prohibited Natal Kin and Permitted Milk Kin in Sunni Islamic Jurisprudence [24]

A man *may* not marry	A man *may* marry
1 a) 'The uterine sister of his child' *[i.e. his wife's daughter]*	1 b) The milk-sister of his child 1 c) The mother (or sister) of his (wife's) milk-child
2 a) 'The mother of his agnatic sibling' *[i.e. his father's wife]*	2 b) The milk-mother of his sibling 2 c) The mother (or sister) of his milk-sibling
3 a) 'The mother of a grandchild' *[i.e. his son's wife, or his daughter]*	3 b) The milk-mother of his grandchild 3 c) The mother of his daughter's (or son's wife's) milk-child
4 a) 'The grandmother of a child' *[i.e. his wife's mother, or his mother]*	4 b) The grandmother of his wife's milk-child 4 c) The mother of his child's milk-mother
5 a) The wife of a grandfather	5 b) The milk-mother of a parent's sibling

Most practioners working in this field look upon the institution of milk kinship as pre-Islamic and as having its origins in customs prevalent in Arabia at the time of the Prophet. As mentioned above, Muhammad himself was put to nurse with a woman of the Banu Sa'd who reared him among her own tribe until he was five. According to a later version, Muhammad was suckled by several (more than ten) wet nurses. The *Qur'an* itself devotes diminutive attention to the institution, limiting itself to the impediment to marriage incurred between a man and his milk mother and milk sister. It is in the traditions – based on *hadiths* – that the elaboration of the custom is to be found.

The milk relationship that predominantly comes into subsistence on breastfeeding practice itself has an imperative medical and socio-cultural role. It has many anthropological aspects concerning the 'power structures' that find their expression in breastfeeding and the practices that formed around it – in idiom of socially, scientifically and juristically. Breastfeeding has been given much attention by religions and taboos, folklore and fallacy thrive around it, thus making it a subject of genuine curiosity. Notwithstanding the sexual-esthetic function of the female breast, its true wonder lies in the power to lactate, the maternal attribute that has enabled mammals to survive over millennia. Lactation has a direct beneficial effect on the infant in that it promotes its growth and normal development and confers protection against various infantile diseases, especially infections.

In many societies the rules regarding breastfeeding were laid down by men who tend to support male-dominated institutions.[22] For example, in those countries which observe Muslim civil law, the duty of a woman to feed her husband's children, the duration of feeding and the conditions under which she may feed children other than her own, thus establishing links of milk kinship, are all prescribed by a male-dominated paternal legal system. However, the feeding of one woman's

child by another has been also used in different societies for assorted grounds: for e.g., to make peace between two tribes, to consolidate clan unity, to prevent marriage, to create clients, and in sum, to attain objectives which lie far beyond the nursing woman's own interest. In many, we may find a 'muted' or 'counterpart model' which stresses women's reproductive power and their intrinsic physical benevolence. Yet, in these same societies, a woman's milk is a sign of the blessing and abundance (*baraka*) that she brings to her husband's household, fields, animals, and on which his prosperity depends.[23] That is, breast milk is a female source, whose cultural and institutional importance is such that men and women contend for its control. The mode and circumstances of breastfeeding are also considered in many societies to be fundamental in the definition of mother-child and in general of adult-child relationship.

Breastfeeding Folklore

A rich folklore with regard to breastfeeding in comparison with milk kinship emerged during the ancient and medieval times within various cultures. Unequivocally, the Islamic societies relied on many common beliefs and superstitions, some of which were based on the writings of Islamic doctors: for e.g., that milk was claimed to transmit mental and moral traits to the infant in addition to its presumed physical advantage. Other myths have sometimes been developed with the aim of achieving social, religious, or cultural goals, such as tribe expansion under milk kinship laws. An added example is the Islamic concept that sexual intercourse with a nursing woman is harmful, both for the nursling and the woman herself if she is carrying a fetus. Rashid al-Din does inveterate in his *Jami al-Tawarikh* that Mongol customs forbade wet nurses to have intercourse with their husbands fearing 'contamination' of their milk.[24] This genus of myth has been used in some paternal societies as a justification for handing over newborns to a wet

nurse so that men may resume sexual activity soon after their wives have given birth.[25] Many old myths regarding the process of breastfeeding can still be encountered despite the vast scientific progress although attributed mainly owing to ignorance. Some examples recently addressed in the midwifery literature are: a connection between yellow colostrums and neonatal jaundice, that the breasts empty after a feed, that there is less milk in the evening, that a mother should drink and eat a lot to make milk, that drinking cow's milk makes human milk and finally that small breasts do not make enough milk.[26] With regard to the latter for a case in point, the aboriginal Juangs (tribe in Odisha) actually consider small flat breasts as the most effective milk producers. The ability to stimulate or suppress milk production has been ascribed to many herbs and foods. Alfalfa, peanuts, beans, coffee, anise, and fennel have all been related with increased milk production.[27] Sesame-seed cakes are still being used in Mexico while goat's milk is being used in some parts of India. Fascinating folkloristic methods include relaxation with soothing music that was popular during the Renaissance period or using plant poultices covered with heated stones. In early as the first century AD, the Roman physician Soranus too advised on hiring wet nurses.[28] It was said that the best wet nurse should be chosen. The preferred profile of a wet nurse was a woman aged 20 to 40 years (experienced, but not too old), that had given birth twice or thrice and has been nursing for at least three months, healthy and of large frame (thought to be more nourishing) with medium-size unwrinkled breasts and nipples, that does not drink (which may be harmful to the nursling), and is not ill-tempered (as character was thought to pass with milk).

In some societies in the past, female breast was regarded as a sacred object and breastfeeding was assigned many religious roles apart from maternal imagery. Breast milk was believed to be menstrual blood that had been heated, coagulated and whitened by hot air according to the Jewish Talmud, Aristotle,

Galen, and later Middle-Age philosophers. The concepts of breastfeeding in Christianity have been implicated mostly with regard to Virgin Mary and her child Jesus Christ. Contrary to modern days, Jesus Christ has been often portrayed as having feminine qualities in medieval times.[29] This includes both having physical feminine attributes such as lactating breasts as well as religious ones, such as Christ lactating his believers, reversing the role of Mary and Christ-child to Mother Jesus and the child-like soul. Others have connected the wound in Jesus' side and breasts full of soul-sustaining milk or used breast milk symbolism to illustrate ideas of the motherhood of Christ versus the fatherhood of God.[30] The breasts of Virgin Mary have probably been depicted in more images than the breasts of any other woman in history. Mary's breasts are full of not only milk but fraught with symbolism and spirituality. The Virgin and Christ are commonly depicted in the intimate embrace of breastfeeding (designated 'Maria Lactans'), which signifies the humanity of Christ and the gift of God and occasionally grace and humility.[31] It has been speculated that the 'Maria Lactans' had originated from the pagan Egyptian descriptions of the goddess Isis nursing her son Horus. The Old Testament and various Jewish religious sources also refer to breastfeeding on many occasions. The first reference in Hebrew Scriptures is found in the book of Genesis (21:17). One of the most famous stories on wet nursing appears in Exodus where Pharaoh's daughter sends Miriam to call for a wet nurse for baby Moses (Exodus 2:7-10). Similarly, many recommendations with regard to the preferred timing for weaning are made in the Bible.[32] As mentioned with regard to Christianity, breastfeeding was also used metaphorically, e.g. the city of Jerusalem pictured as a nursing mother to her inhabitants (Isaiah 66:10-12). Moreover, successful breastfeeding has been brought as a benediction (Genesis, 49:25) while dry breasts were the symbol of a malediction (Hosea 9:14).

Cultural Significance of Breastfeeding

One peculiar, historically significant and once widespread facet of this theme that seems scantily scrutinized is the establishment of enduring ties between infants of different parents who suck at the same breast and its imperative social, political and economic consequences. The ties here are a means of establishing a durable bond amid two groups of people that can perform a variety of functions: to link otherwise isolated groups in structurally divided societies; to increase the social distance of one group from another; and to control others' behaviour. Noticeably the bonds of breast milk should not be measured as a universal recognizable fact. In some cultures women never suckled others' infants, regarding the very idea as repulsive, aberrant or even dangerous to the life of the women.[33] Irrespective of any historical phase, mothers of Baganda (in East Africa) for instance refuse to allow surplus expressed milk to be fed to other babies[34]– comparable to the milieu of modern age. Nevertheless, the milk tie was a strikingly widespread phenomenon practised by various societies of the world. The mainstream facts available on this affluent custom consist of mere snippets of information collected by travelers, doctors and ethnographers. Some of the excerpts collected here in the following discussion give us an understanding of the historical or contemporary extent of the practice.

Starting with the westernmost examples, Dunn in his 'Berber Imperialism...' [35]writes of the campaign waged in the late eighteenth century by one Moroccan tribe against another. When the latter finally surrendered, the former did not subordinate but united them in a pact known in the region as *tafargant* (prohibition). The ritual involved the exchange of milk from lactating mothers that denote that *tafargant* stipulated not only peaceful relations and mutual aid but also strict prohibition on marriage between the two tribes. Thus proscription implied symbolic brotherhood between them and apparently had the practical function of eliminating one major

cause of tension. The prominent author of the field, Vanessa Maher[36] states that in the Middle Atlas region of Morocco, a mother must have the permission of her husband before she nurses another's child. All the examples of milk kin that Maher came across were between a mother and relatives of her husband – not one between a mother and her relatives. Information on milk kinship from Near East is tantalizingly brief. Hammel and Filipovic[37] both mention that in the Balkans, siblingship can be created between two children if they are suckled by the same mother devoid of any further amplification. [38]According to Davis, in traditional Turkey, a mother's child and her nursling become 'milk siblings' and thus cannot intermarry.[39]

Whilst the practice of milk kinship in West Asia is still trendy, the number of children so nursed evidently has declined considerably in the recent past. According to Naumkin, on the Island of Socotra (east of Aden), infants are nursed by women from outside the father's clan. If both parents are from different tribes, they are placed with the tribes or clans that stand closer to that of the mother.[40] In the southern Egyptian village studied by Ammar,[41] people remembered who had nursed whom so that the local marriage taboos would not afterward be broken. Wet nursing was not encouraged amongst relatives where future marriage of the children was anticipated. Ammar underlines the importance of the milk relations by reporting the locally-repeated tale of Harun al-Rashid, an eighth-century Caliph of Baghdad, who decided to kill his *wazir* and to punish his family because he believed that they had conspired to topple him. Although the *wazir's* 'mother' appealed to Caliph whom she had nursed as a child, yet he went forward with his verdict. Chroniclers of the region considered this an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder – alike to mother. [42]

Among the urban elite of Saudi Arabia, Altorki[43] argues that milk kinship was created for two primary reasons: i) *domestic*

convenience; since a woman was (and still to a great extent is) compelled to veil before man other than a close kinsman, whom she could not marry, a man might ask his slave woman to nurse his daughters, so that they would not later have to veil to her son(s). ii) *Forestalling potential marriages; g*iven the local preference for the intermarriage of cousins and the prevalence of extended households composed of the families of adult brothers, a jealous man could prevent an undesirable marriage by having his wife nurse the children of the envied brother. For Iranian landowning elites, both of these reasons are highly bizarre.[44] For the sake of domestic convenience, these Iranians did not have to establish milk kinship with their servants; they instead resolve it by means of temporary fictive marriage contracts (a traditional device) between the servant and one of the children of the household head. If they have to call on the services of a wet nurse, their only concern was to avoid a choice of milk mother which could affect future marriage arrangements.

According to Granqvist – who had lived among Palestinian Bedouin in 1920s – local Muslim infants could be nursed by Muslim, Christian or Jewish mothers. By the same token, a Muslim could nurse a Christian, and the consequences would be understood in local terms.[45] Dickson provides an appealing example of milk relations in Damascus concerning the British Consul's wife [then] at Damascus [in 1881] who failed to breastfeed, as her son records*:* 'a lactating girl was duly produced *(by an astute sheikh of the Anizah group)* and according to my mother's testimony I drank her milk for several weeks. Thus Bedouin entitled me to a certain 'blood affinity' with the Anizah; to drink a woman's milk in the desert is to become a child of the foster mother. This fact has been of assistance to me in dealings with the Bedouin'. [46]

Arthur Lyall in his *Asiatic Studies* has stated that the Rajputs chiefs in India chose wet nurses (*dhaa maa*) for their children from a well-known pastoral tribe measured milky and strong.[47]

The nurse's family held a recognized hereditary status of 'kinship by milk' and when the nursed man finally assumed the chieftaincy, his milk brothers often attained much influence and position at his court – reasonably identical to Mughal archetype. In the Muslim Thai village studied by Hanks, if a wet nurse was employed, her child had to be of the same sex as the child to be nursed.[48] This was not only because the milk intended for a child of the opposite sex was believed to cause disease and even death in the nursling, but because incest might occur otherwise when the milk siblings became adults. For a far-sighted father, marrying off his children strategically was one way to extend, in the right direction, his family's network of kin and relatives; using his children to create milk-ties with people though they could not marry was another concern. In pre-Revolutionary Russia, Christian villagers of northern Georgia and their Muslim counterparts over the Caucasian mountains used to sell their produce to one another by making hazardous treks through the high passes.[49] Since cross-creed marriages were prohibited, the best way for a pair of already close trading partners to strengthen their relationship was for one of them to nurse and bring up a child of the other. In order not to appear suspicious, the family of the 'adopted' child rarely made the trek over the mountains to visit. The child returned home before entering adolescence so that it could not be thought the 'adoptee' families were exploiting his, or her, labour. Nevertheless, the ultimate aim of this tie was not for the partners to make a balanced exchange but to ensure the survival of the partnership across generations, for the milk siblings would speak the same language, know the same traditions, and help each other with transport, trade and hospitality. In Georgia today, milk siblingship is seen as an important, intimate relationship. The parents exchange favours, gifts, and visits, and it is expected that the milk siblings will be on close terms with each other throughout life.

The most sweeping elaborate use of the milk tie for political

purposes was noticed in the tiny kingdom of Chitral (northern Pakistan). In this markedly hierarchical state of royalty, the rulers used to give their children away at birth to be fostered by noblewomen. These women would share the nursing of the children with as many of their female dependents as possible.[50] In this way the welfare of a royal child involved a large number of people. Foster-parents of a child received land and other gifts on presenting her at court when she reached seven; on her marriage, one of her milk siblings would accompany her to her new home. Those who had reared a prince would not only receive similar gifts on his handing-over but stood to gain even more: if at an early age he was made the governor of a province, his milk brothers/fathers became his main advisors and ran his executive. A prince was usually made governor of the area where he had been fostered so that he would be fully acquainted with the natives and would consider himself, to a certain extent, one of them.[51] Nobles, who headed tribes or clans, followed the royal example by farming out all their infants to families of lower status, who in return enjoyed particular privileges and were excused the payment of certain tithes. A contemporary visitor to the region observed that the foster parents continually show great devotion and abnegation to this cuckoo in their nest, and their own children suffer. Schomberg while travelling in this region has known cases where the foster fathers have spent all their subsistence on some useless brat of the aristocratic class.[52] Again, like their superiors, nobles might have their babies passed around a whole village or local tribe. Thus, an infantile noble suckled by several dozen different women might grow up to have fifty milk-mothers, fifty-milk fathers and hundreds of milk-siblings, who would subsequently support and protect him.

There were other ways for tribes and clans to exploit the milk relations to their own advantages. For example, once the King confiscated the houses and lands of the Roshte tribe and forced them to flee from their inhabitant place. It is said that

only one of them, a woman with an infant, decided to remain. Coincidently one of her friends, wife of the King, then had given birth to a son. And that woman helped the King's wife to suckle the son and consequently proclaimed that she was now the milk mother of the Prince. The King, though enraged, could not object to the demands of his new kinswoman and thus restored all rights to the Roshte.[53] It is imperative to note that in areas where milk kinship is already established, the symbolism of the practice may be exploited performatively in order to create structurally similar relations between adults. In these cases, the milk kinship based on immature breastfeeding is used as a model for the creation of a life-long tie. Granqvist states that a Palestinian woman who wished to adopt a stranger boy or man could do so by publicly putting her nipple into his mouth, saying, 'thou are my son in God's book, thou has sucked from my breast'.[54] According to Granqvist, 'one rationale for adoption is often the fact that a woman has to be alone with a strange man for some time as on a journey and to protect her reputation'.[55]

The existence of milk relations may also be used by women to achieve some degree of gender equality. Patricia Daugherty, who worked among the Yorul community in the Taurus Mountains above the south Turkish town of Alanya, has reported that its women may well take advantage of the milk-tie in order to gain some measure of control over the otherwise male-dominated system of arranged marriages. Furthermore, the creation of a milk-bond may be exploited in order to warrant a reputation that is on the point of being ruined. In Georgia, if a husband thought his wife unfaithful, he called the suspected paramour to his house, bared his wife's right breast, put salt on it, and asked the man to kiss it. The suspect had no option: if he kissed it, he would be milk-tied to the woman for life and so could not, under threat of punitive retribution, have sex with her; if he did not kiss it, he incriminated himself and faced punitive retribution. Once the deed was done, the husband

would address the couple: 'man, behold your mother – woman, behold your son', to ensure that his wife and new milk son-in-law could meet openly without fear of raising any suspicion, for now incest was out of the question.

An equivalent use of milk-tie was employed among the Afghans of the Hindu Kush, as noted by a British colonial officer Biddulph, 'in cases where conclusive proof (of adultery) is inadequate and the matter brought for settlement before the ruler, assurance is taken for the future by placing accused lips to the woman's breast so that henceforth she is regarded as his foster-mother, and no other relations other than those of mother and son can exist between them. So sacred was the bond thus established that it has never been known to be broken'.[56] Apart from Biddulph's uniquely valuable testament, there are further colonial accounts and many incidental references to milk kinship in this region. D. L. R. Lorimer had recorded in exacting detail the complex ceremonies for establishing royal fosterage in Hunza, together with all subsequent gift-exchanges at the rites of passage of royal foster children:

> In Hunza, when a son or daughter is born to the *tham* [ruler], they give the child to be fostered. When they take the princess or prince to the foster-parent's house, the foster-father, slaughtering a goat/sheep and taking bread with him, goes along with his brothers and sons and relations and his wife's brother and her father to the palace. The *tham* provides for each of them a robe and a turban and two or three sets of clothes for the man's wife, and give him bedclothes for the princess or prince, and sends them away to the foster-house. When the child has reached the age for marriage they hand it over to the *tham.* The foster-parents having had the trouble of keeping the infant, the *tham* gives them land in return for the laps of their clothes, being rotten. They call that land *u'us'aki* [fostering]'.[57]

As apparent from the foregoing discussion, the most interesting concern in milk relations is the variety of purposes to which that connection can be built and the associations we can make between certain purposes and certain forms of social organization. It is evident that in societies where rules of

intermarriage consolidate the coherence of certain sub-groups (and so isolates them in the process), the establishment of milk-bonds is a means of creating lasting links with groups of people whom one is not allowed to marry: clearly the case for caste-divided societies; for groups who need to maintain co-operative relations with their neighbours; and for religiously-defined groups who wish to uphold links with members of other faiths. Nevertheless the current evidences allow us to state that the practice of milk kinship is now stridently declining due to diverse *raison d'etre* such as gradually more widespread distribution of formula milk and the general shift from extended rural families to nuclear urban ones, and to the gradual decline of kinship as the central model of mutual relations. The decline obviously is no reason for us to ignore the practice and to keep on overlooking its purposeful exploration. In this sagacity, milk kinship is neither a historical peculiarity nor just an ethnographic oddity. The knowledge of its existence and types are important for historical record and information, its nature and implementation too are imperative for understanding the varieties of kinship.

NOTES

1. Janet Carsten, ed. *Culture of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds. *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.
2. See for a useful discussion, Ladislav Holy, *Anthropological Perspectives on Kinship*, London: Pluto Press, 1996.
3. David M. Schneider, *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984.
4. Edmund Leach, 'Virgin Birth', *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, (1966), pp.39-49.
5. David M. Schneider, *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968, pp.21-29.
6. Schneider, *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*, p.188.
7. Schneider, as told to Richard Handler, *Schneider on Schneider: The Conversion*

of the Jews and Other Anthropological Stories, ed. Richard Handler, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995, pp.193-94.

8. Richard Handler, *Schneider on Schneider*, p.197.
9. *Rida'a,* in its general sense means a child suckling milk from the breast of woman for a certain time which is termed in general the period of infant-fosterage. See also, n. I (Chapter 3) and accompanying text.
10. Janet Carsten, 'The Substance of Kinship and the Heat of the Hearth: Feeding, Personhood and Relatedness among the Malays in Pulau-Langkawi', *American Ethnologist,* 22 (1995), pp. 223-41; idem, *The Heat of the Hearth: The Process of Kinship in a Malaya Fishing Community,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
11. M. Weismantel, 'Making Kin: Kinship Theory and Zumbagua Adoption', *American Ethnologist*, 22 (1995), pp. 685-704 (see, p. 695).
12. For e.g., Ladislav Holy, *Kinship, Honour, and Solidarity: Cousin Marriages in the Middle East*, Manchester: University Press, 1989, pp.9-10, 34; N. Tapper, *Bartered Brides: Politics, Gender and Marriage in an Afghan Tribal Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.18.
13. The theme of substance is taken up from Castern's paper (2001) where she discusses in detail the many different kinds of meaning that may be attached to the concept, see '*Substantivism, Antisubstantivism, and Anti-antisubstantivism*', in Franklin and Susan, *Relative Values*, pp.29-53.
14. Michel Foucault*, Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 26-27; idem, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurely, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990, p.92.
15. Thomas Watenberg, *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990, Chapter 6.
16. See for instance, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hasting, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1959 [1913], Vol. IV, pp. 104-09. In present work, the word fosterage may sometime appear intermittently interchangeable with milk relationship.
17. Adoption played a major part in the traditional law of many societies. For significant discussion on adoption, see Jack Goody, *Production and Reproduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp.66-85.
18. For e.g., the milk tie was not knotted by a single feeding but determined by a complex formula. Learned scholars debated the matters pertaining to how many feeds, and of what volume, were necessary to knot the milk tie. To them, estimates ranged from one to ten feedings to a few drops on separate occasions. Some jurists contended that an infant's involuntary pause while sucking marked the end of one feed and the beginning of another; others would only recognize this break if the mother had deliberately interrupted her suckling. Some argued it was sufficient for a child to drink five times from a pot containing a woman's milk; their opponents counter-argued that a child had only to drink from a pot containing a woman's milk collected on five separate occasions. Further issues

in this arcane debate included the nature of testimony required for proof of the relationship, and whether cheese made from a woman's milk was an acceptable substitute.

19. M. Rodinson, *Muhammad: Prophet of Islam*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2002, p.44. See also G. H. Stern, *Marriage in Early Islam*, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1939, p.96.
20. Sorya Altorki, 'Milk kinship in Arab Society: An Unexplored Problem in the Ethnography of Marriage', *Ethnology*, 19, 2 (1980), pp.233-44.
21. Adapted from Altorki, 'Milk Kinship in Arab Society', p.236 (Table-2).
22. See Vanessa Maher, ed. *The Anthropology of Breast-Feeding: Natural Law or Social Construct*, Oxford: Berg, 1992, pp.1-37.
23. In the northwestern mountains of Tunisia (Khroumirie), women have additional reasons for appreciating breastfeeding. There is a cultural axiom that the flowing of a mother's milk and her baby's feeding is a sign of *baraka*, a life sustaining force. When a mother transmits this force, it is not only the nursling who prospers but also everybody and everything pertaining to the house. Hence, people feel proud in their general circumstances when a baby fares well. The best time to study ideas of nursing is whilst the baby falls ill. The Khmir think of a baby as a creature perfect by nature. In practice this means that when a baby falls ill, the explanation that is given most frequently is that his mother's milk did not suit him – *hilb msuma* (bad milk). Bad milk may occur at any stage of the lactation period with the exception of the first forty days. It is a symbolic number, standing for the fulfillment of motherhood and the perfect condition of the mother-child unity. It is believed that there are five variants of children's illness, caused by 'bad milk': *bunaghut, afn, shedd, felg and helg.* They have no generic name and the differences between the variants are of lesser importance. A general opinion in the villages is that *bunaghut* is caused by the baby's feeding on the breast just after the mother had come back from fetching wood in the mountains. People believed that the mother's milk becomes warm and churned up because of the overheated condition of the whole body. The milk in the breasts presumably returns to its normal state after half an hour. Supernatural agents have never been implicated in the change in the milk. Milk illness is cured by carrying out a ritual that affirms that mother is indeed able to spread *baraka*. After the treatment, the baby accepts the breast again and the symptoms of illness disappear. See D.B. Jelliffe and E.F.P. Jelliffe, *Human Milk in the Modern World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp.4-5; also Marie-Lousie Creyghton, 'Breast-Feeding and *Baraka* in Northern Tunisia', in Maher, *The Anthropology of Breast-Feeding*, pp. 37-45.
24. Rashid al-Din, *Jami al-Tawarikh*, ed. B. Karimi, 2 vols, Tehran: Iqbal, 1976.
25. Creyghton, 'Breast- Feeding and *Baraka* in Northern Tunisia', pp. 37-45.
26. Health Division, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, *Promoting Breast-Feeding – Victorian Breast-Feeding Guidelines*, Melbourne: Department of Human Services, 1998.

27. S.K. Niazi, *Attacking the Sacred Cows: The Health Hazards of Milk*, New York: Esquire Books, 1987.
28. Soranus, *Gynaecology*, trans. O Temkin et al., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, p.90.
29. C.V. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
30. E.A. Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*, New York: Oxford. 1994.
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32. G.R. Driver and John C Miles, eds. *The Babylonian Laws*, 2 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952, pp.405-06.
33. Valerie Fildes, *Wet Nursing. A History from Antiquity to the Present*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988, p. 265.
34. D.B. Jelliffe, 'Culture, Social change and Infant-feeding: Current trends in Tropical Regions', *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 10 (1962), p.22.
35. R.E.Dunn, 'Berber Imperialism: The *Ait'Atta* Expansion in Southeast Morocco', in E. Gellner and C. Micaud, ed. *Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa*, London: Duckworth, 1973, pp.85-108.
36. Vanessa Maher, 'Possession and Dispossession: Maternity and Mortality in Morocco', in H. Medick and D.W. Sabean, ed. *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Subject of Family and Kinship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp.103-28 (see p.107).
37. E.A. Hammel, *Alternative Social Structures and Ritual Relations in the Balkans*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968, p.30; M.S. Filipovic, 'Forms and Functions of Ritual Kinship among South Slavs', *V Congrès international des sciences anthropologiques et etnologiques Tom* II, Vol.1, Paris, 1963, pp.77-80.
38. A. Doja, 'Morphologie traditionnelle de la société albanaise', *Social Anthropology*, 7 (1999), pp. 37-55.
39. J. Davis, *People of the Mediterranean: An Essay in Comparative Social Anthropology*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, pp. 237-38.
40. V. Naumkin, *Island of the Phoenix: An Ethnographic Study of the People of Socotra*, Reading UK: Ithaca Press, 1993, p.282.
41. Hamed Ammar*, Growing up in an Egyptian Village: Silwa, Province of Aswan*, London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1954, p.102.
42. Ammar, *Growing up in an Egyptian Village*, p.99.
43. Altorki, 'Milk Kinship in Arab Society', pp. 240-41.
44. Jane Khatib-Chahidi, 'Milk Kinship in Shi'ite Islamic Iran', in Maher, *The Anthropology of Breast-Feeding*, pp. 109-33.
45. H. Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Elsingfors: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1947[1931], p.252.
46. H.R.P. Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951, p.7.

47. Arthur Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*: *Religious and Social*, London: John Murray, 1882, p.221.
48. See J.R. Hanks, *Maternity and its Rituals in Bang Chan*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963.
49. T.Dragadze, The Domestic Unit in a Rural Area of Soviet Georgia, Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1987, cited in Peter Parkes, 'Alternative Social Structures and Foster Relations in the Hindu Kush', *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, 2001, pp. 4-36 (see p. 7).
50. John Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh*, Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1971 (1880), pp.82-83.
51. Parkes, 'Alternative Social Structures and Foster Relations', pp.4-36.
52. R.C.F. Schomberg, *Kafirs and Glaciers: Travels in Chitral*, London: Hopkinson, 1938, p.225.
53. Parkes, 'Alternative Social Structures and Foster Relations', pp.24-25.
54. H.Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs: Studies in a Muhammadan Village in Palestine*, Helsingfors: Söderström & CO Förlagsaktiebolag, 1947, p.114.
55. Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, p.65.
56. Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh*, p. 77.
57. D.L.R. Lorimer, *Texts on Hunza, Gilgit, Yasin and Chitral*, ed. with German commentary by I. Mḷller-Stellrecht as *Materialen zur Ethnographie von Dardistan (Pakistan) aus den nachgelassenem Aufzeichnungen von D. L. R. Lorimer: Vol. I Hunza, Vol. II Gilgit, Vol. III Chitral und Yasin*, Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Vol. I, pp. 138-40.

    Studied elsewhere, royal fosterage in consequence assimilated a Turko-Persian rite of incorporation similar to the court rituals of the Mughal *durbars* of India, whereby the tribute and valuables of a subordinate (*nazar*) were exchanged for an investiture with robes of honor (*khil'at*). Such rituals of allegiance in Hunza were materially important transactions. For e.g., Tham Ghazanfar Khan, in the early decades of the previous century, reportedly 'gave many grazing-grounds and orchards' together with irrigated land as *u'us'aki* benefices. Foster-kin subsequently fighting for a successful prince might further gain huge estates seized from exiled rivals, as well as lucrative tax-farming offices at the royal court, which might be subinfeudated to lower-ranking orders of milk kin allegiance. See Balkrishan Shivram, 'From Court Dress to the Symbol of Authority: Robing and 'Robes of Honour' in Pre-Colonial India', *Studies in Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. XIII, 2 (2006), pp.1-28.; see also B. S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Oxford University Press, 1983, pp.632- 82 (see p. 635 ff).

CHAPTER-2

BREAST MILK AS A KINSHIP FORGING SUBSTANCE

The idiom 'blood relatives' subsists as an established and implicit part of European glossary. It is only in current times that anthropologists focusing on kinship studies have levelled a critique against the widespread relevance of the metaphor of 'blood' as an essence that establishes kinship relatedness. Adam Kuper, for example, argues that the notion of blood relatedness is culturally inhibited, a distinctively European conception that finds its fullest articulation within British imperialism, an era that coincides with the development of the field of anthropology in Europe.[1] Similarly, Edouard Conte, who examines concepts of relatedness within Arab cultures, posits that the notion of kinship being determined by 'blood' is a predominantly western phenomenon and does not fit the self-understanding of Muslim.[2] He argues that classical Arab/Islamic physicians deal little with blood and do not see blood as passing on hereditary characteristics. The word 'breast' cannot be defined merely as 'an organ of nourishment' in Islam, but rather an organ through which ethnicity and status is transferred from the nursing mother to the suckling child. A reconstruction of the nature and prevalence of methods of infant feeding in the past helps to shed light on vital aspects of family life and the lives of women and children: women's status within the family and their relationships with their husbands and infants, the physical treatment children received, the psychological relationships that evolved between children and their parents and nurses, and so on.

Social and Cultural Implications of Breastfeeding

A number of ethnographies and historical studies published in the last two to three decades indicate to the understanding within a wide variety of cultures and across centuries of history that the act of breastfeeding and the substance of breast milk institute kinship relatedness. In most cultures as revealed in the previous chapter, breast milk is not viewed simply as a substance of nourishment, but is in fact imbued with significant 'cultural elaboration'.[3] Subsequent discussion shall focus on different cultures to substantiate that their indigenous conceptualizations of kinship comprise a focus on breast milk.

In a 1992 volume entitled *The Anthropology of Breast-Feeding: Natural Law or Social Construct*, Vanessa Maher noted the manifested 'social dimension' to breastfeeding in a wide variety of cultures. She stressed that breastfeeding, like female sexuality and child birth, is the theme of significant cultural elaboration in most societies.[4] The act of breastfeeding indeed was reflected first and foremost an act understood to infuse culturally defined special boundaries in the child, besides it transmit maternal traits from mother/or wet nurse to child.[5] For example, Hejaz in Saudi Arabia believed that disposition impressed by the mother's milk cannot be altered by anything with the exception of death. In patrilineal societies, the acknowledged power of breast milk to transmit traits from mother to child resulted in laws that gave the father control over who provided breast milk to his child and for how long.[6] Edouard Conte in his 2003 study of *Arab Conceptualizations of Kinship* states that Arab texts do present kinship bonds in terms of pooled substance, but the substance is not blood (*dam*), but rather meat or flesh (*lahma*). While blood imagery is used at times, it 'has no claim to precedence'.[7] Blood is used with regard to retribution in that the 'killer of a kinsman 'cuts the blood' and thereby 'cuts (the bond of) the womb', a term semantically closer to 'kinship' than blood'.[8] Conte asserts that the passing on of hereditary characteristics as presented in Arab

texts is understood 'either in terms of perceived resemblance between males or the acquisition of traits, morphological or psychological, through the mother's or wet nurse's milk'.[9] His examination of Islamic legal texts shows how 'doctors of Law... broke down kinship into three component aspects': *nasab*, *mushara*, and the *rida'a* (which Conte classifies, 'suckling and the relations derived there from').[10] The general word for kinship in Arabic is *qarabah*, meaning 'proximity' or 'propinquity', and Conte shows how this word can be associated with notions of agnatic descent (*nasab*). At the same time, however, he points to a related term *qurbah*, which is normally used in parallel with *rahimh* (uterus), as a way to designate kinship in its 'broadest sense'.[11] Thus, Conte finds in Arabic writings an understanding of kinship based on breast milk, flesh, and 'bonds of the womb' that are wrecked when one spills the blood of a kinsman.

In a 1999 study centring on *Islamic Views of Breastfeeding*, Avner Giladi[12] found that breast milk in Islamic societies creates kinship ties with apparent social implications. The *Qur'an* mentions 'milk mothers' and 'milk sisters' amongst a list of those women sexually prohibited to a man on account of incest (*Qur'an* 4/23).[13] The *hadith* narrative on this *Qur'anic* passage is in agreement that breast milk forges a kinship bond that impedes marriage. Interpretations only vary on how much shared breast milk adequately establishes such a kinship bond, with opinions ranging from a single drop to two full years of nursing.[14] While marital and sexual ties were proscribed to milk siblings, social access between the sexes became freer for those who had nursed at the same breast. For example, a Muslim woman could meet her milk brother unveiled.[15] A wet nurse would have free, familial access to a male child whom she had once nursed for his entire life.[16] The symbolic nursing of an adult male also provided him with social access to the women of the household. [17] Each of these examples shows that breast milk established a kinship ties that had a life-long social impact on a child.

In a 2004 study of the narrative of the Irish and the Abkhazians of pre-modern Eurasia, Peter Parkes scrutinized the role of shared breast milk in establishing a foster kin relationship between children and their wet nurses and also among 'co-nursers' or 'milk siblings'.[18] In his study, Parkes documented an understanding of 'fosterage' established through shared breast milk. Among the Abkhazians, suckling at the same breast established 'consanguine' relationships. [19] Parkes traces the roots of this view of breast milk to Aristotle (384-322 BC) and Galen of Pergamum (AD 129-c.216), both of whom considered breast milk a purified refinement of a woman's uterine blood linking lactation to conjugal procreation. [20] The bond fused through breast milk had entailed lifelong protection and the prosecuting of internecine feuds on behalf of 'milk brothers' and 'milk-sons'.[21] Children of the nurse and strangers that have sucked her milk — love one another better than natural brothers, and hate them in respect of the other and some oppose their own brothers to death that they might save their foster brothers from dangers thereof. In the year 1698, Aurangzeb's son Kam Bakhsh offered to sacrifice his life for the sake of his foster brother.[22] Parallel to Islamic tradition or *hadith,* Mughal literature stipulates that 'milk kinship' could even be forged between adults (*rada al-kabir* or 'suckling a grown-up') through 'symbolic suckling at the breast' and the relationships thus established involved identical moral obligations and impediments on marriage similar to those created through infant.[23] In Mughal history, we find that when 'a begum ... desired to bind an *amir* (or *raja*) to her cause, she would send him a little milk drawn from her breast to drink ... or water to drink with which she had washed her breasts'.[24] Saudi women's perception of threatening to breastfeed their drivers to establish a symbolic maternal bond to gain their right to drive in the ultra-conservative kingdom is also associated with the same effect. One of my informants argued that if the women give their drivers their breast milk, the chauffeurs would

be able to mingle with all members of the family so as to avoid illicit mixing between the sexes.[25] Halimah, the Prophet's wet nurse, is perceived in Islamic traditions as a channel of heredity,[26] and in accordance with this greater tradition, the Mughals, for example, accorded the same high social and political status to the woman who suckled a prince as to the woman who gave birth to him.

Islamic Metaphor

Kinship is a fundamental sphere in human beings and is an introductory systematic instrument in anthropology. Kinship beliefs and relationships among Muslim are extreme in feelings and binding in obligations such that any discourse about kinship leans to be intuitive. Breastfeeding in fact has a religious base in Islam. The *Qur'an* advocates that the mother suckle her offspring for two years if feasible, and states that each infant has the right to be breastfed (*Qur'an* 2/233). If the mother is incapable to suckle, she and the father can commonly agree to let a wet nurse feed the child (*Qur'an* verse 2/233). The anthropological interest in breastfeeding in the lands of Islam indeed began after Altorki's[27] pioneering published article on the subject of suckling in Saudi Arabia. Her publication (1980) was followed by Khatib-Chahidi (1981, 1992)[28]; Conte (1994, 1991)[29]; Long (1996)[30]; Giladi (1999)[31]; Fortier (2001)[32], among others. But despite such increasing attention to suckling studies, the full significance of 'milk kinship' as central to kinship in dynastic state and society was not fully appreciated. As attention to this phenomenon increases, so does confusion as to its name and nature. The designation 'milk kinship' itself is tempting. Its strength lies in its stress on the feminine substance of milk, which does introduce a gender balance in the kinship system whose idiom is cast in patrilineal terms by which genealogical links are agnatic and agnatic ties are bound by nerve. It was a common postulation and belief that suckling is characteristic

of kinship practices among Muslims, until studies pointed to the fact that Christian groups and other cultural groups have apparently similar practices.[33] Parkes[34] mentions Jacobite Syrians, Armenians, and Copts. Parkes also discusses fosterage in the Hindu Kush region.[35] The question arises what is then the difference among these manifestations. It was found that suckling practices that existed since ancient times in the Mediterranean region were pretty prevalent during early Islam in Arabia.[36] It is imperative to mention that the milk kinship emotion which Mughals recognized may not be completely ascribed to the influence of the Muhammadan faith which they had embraced, but marks the pervasiveness of such kinships among them from immemorial time's equivalent to blood-relationship. While belonging to the same general grouping of kinship practices, the character of these practices, referred to as fosterage,[37] appears to be different from regular suckling behaviour manifested among Mughal and other Muslim societies. Some other variants exist among the different groups and in different historical aeons.

Indeed since Galen's time and before – maternal breastfeeding was advocated healthful for both mother and child, but also supported wet nursing as a reasonable alternative when the mother was unable and unwilling to breastfeed. Classical physicians seem to have been aware of the immunogenic qualities of breast milk. Milk, interpreted as a different form of the mother's blood, was seen to transmit some of her own moral, mental, and physical traits to her nursling, therefore, it was suggested to choose a wet nurse with desirable traits similar to those of nursling own family. Awareness that maternal nursing is the best for an infant reflected an awareness of the importance of the mother-infant bond. This positive attitude toward the benefits of nursing could have been further enhanced had there been no negative attitudes toward the colostrum's (whose nutritional and immunogenic qualities were not understood)[38] – a mother was encouraged to find alternative

means of feeding for the first few days until her transitional milk came. Muslim physicians in the 11th century Ibn Sina[39] and in the 12th century Ismail Jorjani [40] had also recommended that new mothers should wait a few days before breastfeeding. In addition to this concern, the social activity of upper-class mothers must have contributed to perpetuation of wet nursing.[41] It also had implications for the relationship between the infant's parents, because sexual relations with a lactating woman were rejected by Muslim physicians and regarded with great ambivalence by jurists because of their assumed 'harm' to the mother's milk flow. Similar to the European prohibitions of such relationships until the early modern times, this rejection was supposedly based on Greek medical thoughts. Husbands, who were considered as those responsible for the welfare of both mother and infant, were thus confronted with a number of choices. Since the taboo was basically a medical rather than a religious one, it could be ignored. Reasonably wealthy men instead could respect it by engaging in other licit relationships with other wives or slaves, or by hiring a wet nurse. In some cultures, breastfeeding was also avoided, because it was believed to advance the ageing process and also slowed down a woman's ability to have additional children. Some nurses may have replaced mothers who had died during childbirth, a common occurrence in all social circles, but many royal and noblewomen had nurses feeding and looking after their children as a matter of course. In contrast to the medieval European custom whereby new-borns were sent away into the countryside to live with contracted wet nurses, Mughals brought wet nurses into their homes where their activities were closely supervised.

The important aspect of wet nursing which greatly occupied the jurists is its role in creating relationships. In broad spectrum, wet nurses were portrayed as having compassion and unconditional love for their charges, in contrast to biological parents, who were seen as cold and calculating. Based on the connection between a mother's blood and milk, and the notion

that milk flowed as a result of a man's semen which circulated in a woman's body, therefore, a man's nurses and milk sisters, as well as some other groups, became part of his *mahram*, the group of people forbidden in marriage because of close relationship. This notion which first appears in *Qur'an* 4/23 was later developed in elaborate detail. Apart from serving the purpose of feeding the child, such relationships could help to modify the rules of social interactions. For example, in a society which does not recognize the notion of adoption, milk kinship could take on the role. The rules governing meeting between a man and his *mahram* were less strict than those who otherwise was eligible for marriage. Thus, the creation of a *mahram* relationship through nursing could extend the circle of men and women who were allowed to meet relatively freely, a practice which reportedly had also been employed by the Prophet's wives. As this was feared by some jurists to invite abuse, they introduced rules which established a minimum of five feeding sessions within the nursing age in order to validate a milk relationship.

Background, Selection, and Duties of the Wet Nurse

Notwithstanding the ample space devoted to studies of European nurses, wet nursing in Islamic societies as a whole has received comparatively derisory attention. This is primarily because in European countries, wet nursing was synchronized by the state and hence was documented expansively. Also, most Catholic lands had copious foundling hospitals for which exhaustive records survive.[42] Quite the opposite foundling hospitals and similar institutions were atypical in the lands of Islam because orphans and foundlings were commonly given instantaneous shelter within their extended families or families of other members of their parents' community, even if not formally adopted — the *Qur'an* verse 33/4-5 cancelled and forbade the adoption.[43] With a near total lack of archival

documentation, the history of the family like issues in pre-modern Muslim societies, therefore, is restricted almost completely to sources of a normative-theoretical character that were again written and compiled by men of upper social strata.

Wet nurses were used extensively in Greek and Roman empires almost exclusively by royalty and the highly born.[44] Unlike the biological fact of giving birth breastfeeding was not considered a 'natural necessity' to biological mother. Concern over the mother growing prematurely old or becoming emaciated due to breastfeeding supposedly provoked Greco-Roman doctors such as Soranus of Ephesus (c. AD 98-138) to recommend a wet nurse. He went even further in recommending the mother only if she shows the characteristics of the best wet nurse.[45] For Galen, as for Soranus, the selection of a wet nurse was vital in order to ensure the highest quality of the milk. Physical appearance was one of the most important criteria Greek doctors stressed.[46] We do find comparable expression in the *Susruta Samhita*, a Brahminical text from second century BC India.[47] The moral character of the nurse was also important to Marcus Fabius Quintilian (c.35-c.100).[48] According to Favorinus of Arelate (c. 80–160 AD), the disposition of the nurse and the quality of the milk play a great part in informing character.[49] Soranus explains that the nurse's moral characteristics have a close bearing on the way she performs her duties and consequently affect the baby. Soranus admits that by nature the child becomes similar to the nurse in disposition, which means that by living together the child picks up her manners.[50] Yet, if we bear in mind the Hippocratic strong link between humours and personality, the nurse's milk which is affected by humours might carry traits of her personality to the nursling.[51] This impact not only has 'some dangerous contagion drawing a spirit into its mind and body from a body and mind of the worst character', but also upon the future relationship between the child and mother; that is, the affections of the child are transferred to the nurse and, thereby, a merely

'courteous and conventional' affection emerges with the parents.[52]

Muslim medical texts also had plenty of advice on making the selection of a wet nurse. The advice which talks about a wet nurse's kind character and pleasant appearance did not differ greatly from that of Greco-Roman doctors and philosophers.[53] But under less than perfect conditions, the most important thing was her health. In selecting a wet nurse, one must look for a woman with a good spirit and a healthy body, whose emotions are peaceful and happy, whose flesh is well-built and plump, who, without many illnesses, knowing the appropriateness of cold and warmth, is able to regulate and control while nursing and feeding, and whose milk is thick and white. Muslim doctors and juristconsults of Middle age such as Al-Jahiz (d.869), Al-Sarakshi (d. 11th century), Ibn Sina Avicenna (980-1037 AD), and Al-Ghazali (d.1111 AD) in the vein of classics believed that breast milk, flowing out of a woman's body, was directly related to her physiology and psychology. For a nursing mother, therefore, what she drank and ate, her emotions, body temperature, and any changes in her health all could immediately affect breast milk, and in turn influence the health and well-being of the child. As a result, there were extremely broad and rigid restrictions on selection.

In Mughal histories, we find developed meticulous requirements for the selection of a wet nurse. Most important criterion was emotional and moral state of the woman; for fear that it could have a bad influence on the child. Therefore, this team was carefully picked up preferably from the family of the household nobles. According to Abul Fazl, a foster mother was required not simply to supply plentiful breast milk but her milk should have been a conduit for her necessarily good temperament and spiritual inclinations.[54] Her family was required to be a loyal supporter of the royal family, and her appointment, like a marriage, could be a vehicle for forging ties between her kinfolk and the royals. *Angah's* position in

durbar was a coveted one, being one of the most influential that a non-royal woman could ever hope for. There was a serious concern the influence the wet nurse could have on the character of the imperial child. Mughals supposedly had also adopted the view that after a long and intimate relationship, the child was likely to be influenced by the disposition of the wet nurse. Wet nurses' duties, besides breastfeeding, often consisted of caring for, and sometimes providing preliminary instruction for the growing child. After nurses' suckling duties were no longer required, they acted as nurse-cum-governess and their husbands as tutor (*ataliq*), until their charge reached adulthood. As the child grew older, the role of the guardian seems to have developed into that of a mentor whereas the nurse's role probably remained that of an affectionate surrogate mother. The education of the future emperor indeed was seemingly in the hands of a number of people. Much of it, certainly in the child's earlier years, took place in the harem, but as the boy grew up, he was shown the workings of government at first hand and probably also given ever-growing administrative responsibilities.

When a member of royalty was expecting, several wet nurses had to be kept 'on standby' parallel to the Hellenistic kings[55] – to ensure that new arrival could be fed on demand. Beside implanting varied disposition of nurses milk multiple wet nurse were perhaps chosen in classic Greco-Roman style as someone's 'pregnancy might not fulfilled' (for e.g., Jiji Angah's in event of Akbar's birth[56]), some may 'lost' their milk or it was judged unfit and other could be victim of the court intrigues. Someone might become ill or die, and then, because of the change of milk, the child sometimes suffers from the strange milk and was distressed, while sometimes it rejects it altogether and succumbs to hunger. The new heir may have had several wet nurses until weaning. There were in fact two in-style types of non-maternal nursing arrangements in the Islamic world: 'mercenary' nurses on the one hand and 'noble' nurses on the

other. Medieval Islamic texts on breastfeeding significantly make a distinction between 'mercenary' wet nursing for payment and 'noble' suckling, the latter indicating allegiance fosterage and politically significant adoptive kinship rather than commercial nursing.[57] The former type of arrangement, the utilization of the mercenary nurse, was a practice where the nursling was entrusted to the care of a wet nurse that was not part of the household, in some cases at some distance. Stipulations were established for the care of the nursling and compensation in case of the death of the child while in the nurse's care. Typically, such an arrangement would last for approximately two years, after which the child would be returned to the parents. The mercenary style of nursing, a respectable form in European aristocracy and urban social group of the Muslim world in the high middle ages, apparently was never in trend among imperial Mughals.

Unlike the mercenary nurse, the Mughals household nurse or servile nurse was not limited only to the first two or three years of the child's development. Mughal sources offer several indications that 'the wet nurse was often an integral part of a child's life from birth to maturity' as the servile wet nurse regularly became a child minder and chaperone for her growing nursling. As a case in point, the mother of Adham Khan, who had the title of 'Maham Angah' great nurse, in actual sense attended on Akbar 'from cradle till after his accession' was for several years heart of 'all affairs in the realm' for a time unusually called 'petticoat government' and her son, Adham Khan Kokah, was a leading commander at one point of time.[58] Examples of the nurse's role and affectionate feelings between the nurse and the former nursling appear recurrently in Mughal sources. On two occasions Akbar as emperor shaved off his head and moustaches as a ritual of mourning for a close relation: on the death of his favourite *angah*, Jiji Angah, and then following the death of his own mother Maryam Makani, Hamida. Akbar himself carried the bier of his Angah to her

burial.[59] On the death of Jahangir's wet nurse in 1606, he [Jahangir] says, 'I placed the feet of her corpse on my shoulders and carried her part of the way. So severe was anguish and distress that I had no proclivity for some days to eat and did not change my clothes'.[60] Aurangzeb's daughter Zebu-u Nisa was so doting to her wet nurse Mian Bai that after her death, the princess had a magnificent tomb built in her memory. The visual evidences as we see in Chapter 4 add to the textual evidence for the continued influence and affectionate relations that nurses had with their former nurslings, even though further child minders would have entered into the child's life, especially *ataliq*. The *atgah* or *ataliq* were typically male equivalent of a nurse and possibly, though not always, the 'husband' or conjugal partner of the nurse. The example of Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Khan, the husband of Jiji Angah, is the most appropriate to be cited here.

Ritual Status of a Mughal Wet Nurse

Mughal textual and visual sources present a very romantic and positive view of the relationship between nurse and nursling and the phenomenon of wet nursing in general. Within Mughal literature, we find the sentiment that foster brothers who shared the same breast milk had a closer relationship and a greater sense of loyalty to each other than they did to their biological brothers who did not share the same breast milk. For instance, in *Tuzuk* of Jahangir, we find the following sentiment: '.... Angah's children are dearer to me than my own brothers .....'[61] A very similar belief is recorded in Abul Fazl's *Akbar Nama* where we find the following passage: 'between me and Aziz (milk brother) is a stream of milk (*juh- i shir*) which I cannot cross'.[62] Mughal prince as grew young views his biological siblings as political rivals and potential murderers, his *kokahs* were for all aims and dedications his real associates. We also find the following response in Mughal histories: *[sibling] is no*

brother! This is ... majesty foe! [63] Among imperial Mughals, the choice of a wet nurse was considered a matter of the utmost importance. Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb pronounced that as good teachings depend upon the life of the mind — the health of the child depends upon the breast milk.[64] Thus, according to Aurangzeb, the prime objective of emperors and princes should have been to 'select vigorous wet nurse who shall provide nourishment to build strong bones and sinews and strength the spines'[65]— the virtues which he finds indispensable for a good sovereign. The contemporary and near-contemporary histories of Mughals testify that the wet nurses chosen for royal infants were nobly born with 'pure disposition and integrity'.[66] Who afterward enjoyed a high status and there was a competition for the position. Their own children, these women knew, would be elevated — in the vein of Pharaonic Egypt — status of milk brother and milk sister to the imperial child. It was almost certain that they would rise to the position of *amirs* of the empire. Because wet nurses had been nursing imperial babies, their own children (prince's milk brother and sister) were brought up within the imperial precincts, mixing freely with the imperial family. Wet nurses wielded great influence in the courts of the Great Mughals and were also often donated ritual buildings, for example, the most well-known of which was the mosque of Dai Angah, wet nurse of Shah Jahan, in Lahore. Akbar for example did built a magnificent tomb for his foster brother, the 'cruel and unprincipled' Adham Khan, that still stands above the *Qutb* complex and the walls of Lal Kot in south Delhi.

The Mughals literature also attests to an understanding of breast milk as a kinship forging substance that confers royal, divine, and often priestly status upon male children in the imperial family. When divine and human kings are presented as those who have nursed at the breasts of heavenliness, it bolsters their royal legitimacy. In the foundational narratives of the Mughals, we find the recurring claim that royal heirs

nursed at the breasts of 'divinity'. The Mughal emperor, whose royal biography includes a breastfeeding notation, we find Akbar, the son and heir of the Humayun, and Jahangir, the designated heir of Akbar. In both cases, these royal heirs were able to claim semi-divine status by virtue of having nursed at the breasts of 'divinity'. For human kings, divine breast milk served as the conduit for bestowing divine traits. Breast milk in that case was understood to establish, confirm, or ratify divinity and/or royalty in the suckling. Abul Fazl writes that through feeding 'it was as if there were Divine wisdom in thus implanting varied temperaments [*masharib*, disposition of nurse milk] by this series of development so that the pure entity advancing by gradation [*vujud*, substance], might become familiar with the divers methods of Divine manifestation'.[67]

Given the significance of feeding to the divine emperor, the selection of wet nurses for Mughal imperial babies therefore was undertaken with extreme carefulness. For example, Abul Fazl in his *Akbar Nama* records that before selection they had to be 'even-tempered, spiritually-minded' [*qabil-i rawhani-i-qavalib*] nurses from whose breasts infant Akbar's 'mouth was sweetened by the life-giving fluid'.[68] The transmission of nurse's moral qualities to the nursling is clearly indicated in our sources. Which means that nature of the child becomes similar to the nurse in disposition – living together, the child may absorb her comportment. The nurse's milk which is affected by humours might carry traits of her personality to the nursling. Abul Fazl at one place avers in verse:[69]

He [Akbar] drew forth milk by the bounty of his lips,
milk and sugar were commingled.
It was not milk he drank from the breast of hope,
it was water from the Sun's fountain that he imbibed.

In Muslim societies as a whole wet nursing may have been a deliberate method by which to enlarge the family, make 'adoption' possible, and generally multiply ties of loyalty and filial duty. Under Mughals the practice involved not just a choice of the mother to forego the joys of child-rearing, but specifically tied to efforts of the father to forge bonding between wet nurse's family and child – compatible to classic Islamic tradition. The references with ties formed by the bountiful milk are voluminous in Mughal histories. The study reveals that wet nurses were far more to the child than merely a nutritional source; they played an active role in shaping the child in his critical early years. Mughal royal wet nurses resembled Nannies in their relations with their charges, providing not only nourishment but also maternal affection and companionship, remaining with them long after weaning, but continuing to be identified as '*angah*'. Most wet nurses became famous for their loyalty to and intimacy with their nurslings, which brought them and their families both material and honorary rewards. Once grown, the nursed child at times would out of gratitude grant his wet nurses various favours while she was alive and mourned when she passed away. Showing love for the woman who had raised him as mentioned afore, the emperor Akbar shaved off his head and moustaches as a ritual of mourning on the death of his favourite *angah* Jiji, and himself, carried her bier to burial. The relationship indeed was a complex one: wet nurses not only (at least potentially) transferred deep maternal feelings to their assignment, their social status and material well-being also depended upon the relationship they had thus forged and maintained. Although the bond between a wet nurse and her charges was often depicted as a kind of mutual devotion, but the reality, perhaps was more complicated in view of the frequent political struggles in imperial courts. Once a woman, was selected as a wet nurse of a royal baby, she was supposedly forced to ignore her own children in the interests of her royal's.

However, the cheer she cherished was the opportunity to promote her family and herself by means of her female dispositions of milk and mothering care. The emotional and psychological difficulties that both wet nurse and a maternal mother encountered though are not recorded in the sources, but should not be undervalued.

NOTES

1. A. Kuper, 'Lineage Theory: A Critical Retrospect', in D. Parkin and L. Stone, ed. *Kinship and the Family*: *An Anthropological Reader*, Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, pp. 79-96.
2. Edouard Conte, 'Agnatic Illusions: The Element of Choice in Arab Kinship', in F. Abdul-Jabar and H. Dawod, ed. *Tribes and Power: Nationalism* and *Ethnicity in the Middle East*, London: Saqi, 2003, pp. 16-17.
3. Maher, 'Breast-feeding in Cross-cultural Perspective: Paradoxes and Proposals', in Maher, *The Anthropology of Breast-Feeding*, pp. 1-36.
4. Maher, 'Breast-feeding in Cross-cultural Perspective', p. 9.
5. Maher, 'Breast-feeding in Cross-cultural Perspective', pp. 28-29.
6. Maher, 'Breast-feeding in Cross-cultural Perspective', pp. 21-25.
7. Conte, 'Agnatic Illusions', p. 17.
8. Conte, 'Agnatic Illusions', p. 17.
9. Conte, 'Agnatic Illusions', p. 17.
10. Conte, 'Agnatic Illusions', p. 20.
11. Conte, 'Agnatic Illusions', p. 20.
12. Avner Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*: *Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications*, Leiden: Brill, 1999.
13. See also Khatib-Chahidi, 'Milk Kinship in Shi'ite Islamic Iran', in Maher, *The Anthropology of Breast-Feeding,* pp. 109-32.
14. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*, pp. 30-31. Khatib-Chahidi ('Milk Kinship in Shi'ite Islamic Iran', pp. 113-18) does provide a full listing of the types of kinship relationships established through breast milk in Islamic Iran.
15. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*, p. 30.
16. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*, p. 27.
17. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*, p. 28.
18. Peter Parkes, 'Fosterage, Kinship, and Legend: When Milk was Thicker than Blood?' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46 (2004), pp. 587-615.
19. Parkes, 'Fosterage, Kinship, and Legend', p. 590.
20. Parkes, 'Fosterage, Kinship, and Legend', p. 590, citing Aristotle *De generatione animalium* IV, vii. Milk's derivation from a woman's uterine blood, transmitted by veins connecting the womb to the breasts, was a pervasive Eurasian notion, also found in Indo-Arabian medicine. Its insinuations for

breastfeeding and entrusted nursing are detailed in the *Gynaecology* of Soranus.

21. S. D. Inal-Ipa*, The Social Reality of the Atalyk Fosterage Institution in 19th-century Abkhazia*, Sukhum: Alashara Publishers, 1956, pp. 80-86, 107-11; S. Benet, *Abkhasians: The Long-living People of the Caucasus*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974, pp. 57-58.
22. Musta'idd Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, translated and annotated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1947, pp. 242-43/398-400 (here and henceforth entry by slash refers Persian text). See also Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mongor or Mogul India*, William Irvine, trans. Calcutta: Editions Indian, 1965, Vol, II, p.466.
23. Prominent Islamic jurists to be listed among the supporters of *radā al-kabír* are Ibn Taymiyya (*Majmu'at Fatawa*, Cairo: 1908, Vol. IV, p. 149) and Ibn Hazm (*Al-Muhalla*, Cairo: 1928-33, pp. 10, 17). For e.g., Ibn Hazm avers: *Wa- radā (u) 'l-kabir muharrim wa-law annahu shaykh yuharrimu kamā yuharrimu radā (u) 'l-sagir, lā'farq*, i.e., the suckling of the grown-up, even when this is an old man, is as effective as the suckling of an infant.
24. When Dara Shikoh's wife wanted to secure the loyalty of Raja Rajrup Singh to her husband's cause, she 'offered him (because she had no milk in her breast) water to drink with which she had washed her breast', says Manucci. The raja drank the water and swore allegiance — and promptly deserted to Aurangzeb (*Storia Do Mongor*, Vol, I, p. 310).
25. The present driving ban applies to all women in Saudi Arabia, in spite of their nationality, and it's been a topic of heated public debate in recent years.
26. Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1983, pp. 23-25.
27. Altorki, 'Milk kinship in Arab Society', pp.233-44.
28. Jane Khatib-Chahidi, 'Sexual Prohibitions, Shared Space and Fictive Marriages in Shi'ite Iran', in S. Ardener, ed. *Women and Space*, London: Croom Helm, 1981; idem, 'Milk kinship in Shi'ite Islamic Iran', in Maher, *The Anthropology of Breast-feeding*.
29. Edouard Conte, 'Entrer dans le sang: Perceptions arabes des origines', in P. Bonte et al., ed. *Al-Ansab. La qûete des origins : Anthropologie historique de la société tribale arabe*, Paris: Editionsde la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme,1991, pp. 55-100;idem, 'Choisir ses parents dans la société arabe: La situation l'avènement de l'islam', in P. Bonte, ed. *Épouser au plus proche. Inceste, prohibitions et statégies matrimoniales autour de la Méditerranée*, Paris: EHSS, 1994, pp.165-87.
30. Debbi Long, Milky Ways: Milk Kinship in Anthropological Literature and in a Turkish Village Community, Thesis (Ph.D) University of Nijmegen, 1996 http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/32554463?versionId=39593734
31. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*.
32. C. Fortier, 'Le lait, le sperme, le dos. Et le sang? Représentations physiologiques de la liation et de la parenté de lait en islam malékite et dans la société maure', *Cahiers d' Études Africaines*, 161 (2001), pp. 97-138.

33. See for e.g., Peter Parkes, 'Fosterage, Kinship, and Legend', pp. 587-615; idem, 'Milk Kinship in Southeast Europe: Alternative Social Structures and Foster Relations in the Caucasus and the Balkans', *Social Anthropology*, 12 (2004), pp. 341-58.
34. Peter Parkes, 'Milk Kinship in Islam: Substance, Structure, History', *Social Anthropology*, 13 (2005), pp. 307-29.
35. Peter Parkes , 'Alternative Social Structures and Foster Relations in the Hindu Kush', *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, 43(2001), pp. 4-36.
36. Parkes, 'Milk Kinship in Islam', pp. 307-29.
37. Parkes, 'Fosterage, Kinship, and Legend', pp. 587-615.
38. Aristocratic elite parents may also have acted on the classical idea (e.g., counsel of Soranus in his *Gynaecology*) that a wet nurse should be used the first weeks after birth because the 'colostrums', the first breast milk of a mother, was unhealthy and difficult to digest.
39. Ali Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna), *The General Principle of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine*, trans. M.H. Shah, Karachi: Neveed Clinic, 1966 [1930], p. 305.
40. Ismaiīl Jorjanī, *Dakīra-yekvarazmsahī*, ed. A.A. Saiīdī Sīrjanī, Tehran: 1976, p. 209.
41. L. G. Deruisseau, 'Infant Feeding', in *Ciba Symposia* II, 5 (1940), pp. 548-56 (see p. 550).
42. For general overview on European nurses, See Valerie Fildes, *Wet Nursing: A History from Antiquity to the Present*, 1988; idem, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986; Sara F. Matthews Grieco, 'Breastfeeding, Wet Nursing and Infant Mortality in Europe (1400-1800)', *Historical Perspectives on Breastfeeding*, Florence: UNICEF, 1991, pp. 15-62; Dorothy McLaren, 'Marital Fertility and Lactation, 1570-1720', M. Prior , ed. *Women in English Society*, *1500-1800* , London: Methuen, 1985, pp. 22-53.
43. See Al-Azhary Sonbol, 'Adoption in Islamic Society: A Historical Survey', in E.W. Fernea, ed. *Children in the Muslim Middle East*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995, pp.45-67.
44. Alarmed by the widespread use of wet nurses by the rich in classical age, Greek and Roman philosophers and moralists such as Pliny, Plutarch, Tacitus, and Aulus Gellius (all from second century AD) accused a mother whose child was wet nursed of being idle, selfish and endangering the emotional bond with her child.
45. *Sorani gynaeciorum libri IV etc*, ed. llberg I, Leipzig & Berlin, Teubner: Corpus medicorum Graecorum, IV (1927), II, pp.11-18. See also Amir bin Bahr Al-Jahiz, *Kitab al-Hayaman*, Vol. V, Cairo: 1938, pp. 366-67.
46. *Sorani gynaeciorum libri IV*, II.12, 19.
47. *Sushruta Samhita*, trans. K.L. Bhishagratna , Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba

Orientalia, 1991. See also Fielding H. Gamson, 'History of Paediatrics', in Isaac A. Abt, *Paediatrics*, Philadephia: W.B. Saunders, 1923, Vol. 1, p. 25; Nirupama Laroia and Deeksha Sharma, 'The Religious and Cultural Bases for Breastfeeding Practices Among the Hindus', *Breastfeeding Medicine*, 1,2 (2006), pp.94-99.

48. *Quintilian*, with an English translation by Butler, London, William Heinemann: Loed Classical Library, Vol. 1, 1.4.
49. Aulus Gellius, *The Attic Nights*, With an English translation by John Cr. London, William Heinemann: Loeb Classical Library, 1948, Vol. II, XII, 1. 21-23.
50. *Sorani gynaeciorum libri IV etc.*, II, pp.12, 19.
51. Aulus Gellius, *The Attic Nights*, XII, 1. 10-20; K. R. Bradley, 'Wet-nursing at Rome: A Study in Social Relations', in B. Rawson, ed. *The Family in Ancient Rome*, London and New York: Croom Helm, pp. 201-29.
52. Cf. Philip L. Tite, 'Nurslings, Milk and Moral Development in the Greco-Roman Context: A Reappraisal of the Paraenetic Utilization of Metaphor in 1 Peter 2.1-3', *Journal of the Study of New Testament,* 31, 4 (2009), pp. 383-84.
53. For e.g., Persian physician Avicenna's (980-1036) wet nurse did not differ greatly from that of Soranus. Avicenna, *The General Principle of Avicenna's*, pp. 286-87.
54. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Maulawi Ahmad Ali and Maulawi Abd-ur-Rahim, ed. Persian text, 3 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873-87; H. Beveridge, trans. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1998, Vol.I, p.130/43. See also Munis Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p.73.
55. For e.g., see Soranus' *Gynaecology*, p. 94. In case of illness Galen also recommended that one should change to another nurse.
56. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.I, p.130 /44.
57. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*, pp. 106-14; Khatib-Chahidi, 'Milk Kinship in Shi'ite Islamic Iran', pp.121-22. Irish fostering law also had distinguished noble 'fosterage for love' (*altram serce*) from professional nursing and rearing, see Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988, p.87.
58. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari,* H. Blochmann, ed. Persian text, 3 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867-77; Trans. vol. I by H. Blochmann, revised by D.C. Phillott, vols. 2 and 3 by H.S. Jarrett, revised by Jadunath Sarkar, Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1994, pp. 329-32; Shyakh Farid Bhakkari, *Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin*, Syed Moin-ul-Haq, ed. 3 vols. Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1961-74; Z.A. Desai, trans. Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi,1993, Vol. I, pp.5-14/11-20. See also Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. II, pp.149-51/ 99-101.
59. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p, 574.
60. Nur ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, A. Rogers, trans. H.

Beveridge, ed. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1968[1909-1914], pp. 84-85.
61. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* , pp. 78-85.
62. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.I, pp. 343-44; Khwaja Nizam-ud din Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, trans. B.De, 3 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1911-39, Vol.III, p.231.
63. Gulbadan Begam, *Humayun Nama*, A.S. Beveridge, ed. & trans. Delhi: Oriental Books, 1983, p. 201.
64. Manucci, *Storia Do Mongor* ,Vol. II, p. 32.
65. Manucci, *Storia Do Mongor*, Vol. II, p. 32.
66. For e.g., Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 129/43.
67. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 131/44.
68. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, pp. 130-31/43-44.
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CHAPTER-3

BREAST FEEDING BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES

In the debate about kinship and social organization in Muslim society, the institution of infant fosterage, *rida'a* or, 'milk kinship' has been largely neglected for which in Islam there exists a whole body of laws and regulations — which regard it similar to blood relationship: affection is due to one's milk kin, but one does not inherit from each other. Milk kinship is technically known as *ridaā'a* or *radā'a*[1] in *Shari'ya,* refers to the process whereby a baby is breastfed by a non-maternal nurse, and as a consequence there emerges a relationship between the nursling and the nurse whereby some degree of marital prohibition in analogy to that of consanguinity would be established between the two and a further, defined set of relatives. As such this set of relationship is unlike to the institutions of fosterage, notwithstanding the fact that it is often denoted to as 'fosterage'[2] — since the latter did not involve the child and nurse in any legally recognized relationship, even though a deep emotional attachment might well develop between them.

Rida'a

The *rida'a* (*-al-ridā'a*) relationships are considered to impede subsequent marriages as incestuous or forbidden (*narawa*) for a wide range of consanguineal kin — the bounds of milk kinship were about expanded in accordance with a saying of the Prophet, 'what is prohibited by *nasab* is prohibited by *rida'a*'

(*fa-innahu yuharramu min (a) 'l-radā' mā yuharramu min (a) 'l-nasab*).[3] In establishing the range of forbidden marriages, a child nursed by a woman (the milk mother) is treated as if it were the child of her husband (the milk father and 'owner' of the milk[4]), so that two children nursed by the same woman are regarded as if their milk mother's husband were their common milk father even if both children have different parents. It follows that a boy and a girl, each nursed by a different wife of the same man, become his milk children, and milk siblings to each other. The kinship through wet nurse in Islam though appears to be culturally distinctive, but by no means unique.[5] The spiritual kinship (*gossipred*) in Christendon and milk kinship in Islam as indicated by Parkes in 2001 and 2003[6] have comparable and connected social histories. Just as one of Eugene Hammel's informants had outlined a distinct tripartition of alternative Balkan relationships — 'patrilineal descent, affinal alliance, and godparenthood (*kumstvo*)' — so in Islamic *shari'ya* law there is a congruent triad of alternatively recognized relationships: 'by blood, affinity and breast-milk'.[7] Islamic milk kinship also has pertinent analogies in equivalent 'affinal blocking' tactics of Balkan godparenthood.[8] Following the Mintz and Wolf's study (1950)[9], Parkes maintains that the uses made of and social structures created by these relations vary according to social and political circumstances.

The *Qur'anic* idea that wet nursing creates impediments to marriage between a nurse and her nursling, as well as between male and female (strange) nursling suckling from the same nurse, is probably based on a pre-Islamic Arabic concept. To lend 'scientific' support to this prohibition, Arabic medical writings adopt the notion, found in the philosophical and medical writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans, that biologically a women's breast milk is essentially identical with uterine blood (as supposed by Aristotle, Soranus and Galen) linking lactation to conjugal procreation. Because of these ideas, it was advised for centuries that women were never to be

employed as wet nurses if they were menstruating or pregnant; for the reason that their milk would be 'spoiled' and/or inadequate for the child. But it remains indistinct whether it was recognized that breastfeeding had a contraceptive function or they were referring to the widespread custom of banning sexual intercourse to suckling women.[10] Bodily fluids indeed were professed by ancient writers as interconnected within foetal growth and the neonate's nurturing, connecting the menstrual blood from which a child is conceived with the milk used to nurse that child – encountered widely in the *Quranic* literature. Just as a foetus will take on qualities from the parents, so also will the child be formed by the milk supplied after birth. In his *Historia Animalium*, Aristotle described how milk came into the breast after childbirth and outlined the duration of lactation and its connection with menstruation.[11]

> Women continue to have milk until their next conception; and then the milk stops coming and goes dry ... so long as there is flow of milk the menstrual discharges do not take place, at least as a general rule, though the discharge has been known to occur during the period of suckling ... when the [animal] is pregnant, milk is found, but for a while it is unfit for use, and then after an interval of usefulness it becomes unfit again.

Aristotle teaching indeed was referred to by writers until well into the eighteenth century. Needless to mention that Arabic and Islamic school of medicine at least for five centuries, following the establishment of Islam, was essentially a Greek medical system, modified and translated into Arabic. On similar elaboration, Islamic milk kinship is phrased in idioms of male proprietorship ('sire's milk'): since lactation is instigated by impregnation, it is said that 'the milk is from the man' (*al-laban li-l-fahl*). Robertson Smith in 1885 noted: 'Ibn Abbas forbids the marriage of a boy and a girl who have been suckled together because the *licah* (semen genitale) is one: the mother's milk being regarded as due to the father's semen'.[12] This widely accepted view is also exemplified by a *hadith* account which

tells how the Prophet had allowed his wife Aisha to meet unveiled a man named Aflah, the brother of Abul Quyas (whose wife had nursed Aisha) though the *Qur'an* (24/31) ordered 'believing women' to 'throw their scarves over their bosoms and not show their ornament except to their husbands or their fathers or the father of their husbands or to their sons or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters', etc. The explanation given was that he had become Aisha's milk uncle, because, as Aflah himself put it 'my brother wife suckled you (Aisha) with my brother milk'.[13] More precisely, it refers not to the woman's husband but to her mate 'copulation partner'. Consequently, a boy cannot be the milk-son of a man who either married the boy's milk-mother after she nursed him or divorced her before she did – provided, of course, that she was neither pregnant nor lactating at the time of the divorce. The concept of *laban al-fahl* as developed in *hadith* literature was apparently inspired by ancient popular ('instinctive') ideas about generation, gestation, nursing and breeding, which held that it was the man's semen which caused the flow of breast milk. The ties were thus created not only between the nursling and the woman who breastfed him or her, but also between the nursling and the woman's husband.

Social and Ritual Implications of Milk Kinship

Before elaborating upon juridical reckoning of milk kinship, it is necessary to consider the role kinship in general plays in Islamic societies and how it affects practising Muslims in their daily lives. In other words, milk kinship must be seen in the context of other forms of kinship if the Islamic rulings on the institution are to be fully understood. The *Shari'ya*,[14] the law of Islam, as we know is based partly on the *Qur'an* [15] and partly on the *hadiths*,[16] which are the pronouncements or acts of the Prophet reported by reliable authorities. In each of the

four orthodox schools of Islamic jurisprudence recognized by the Sunnis (Hanafi, Maleki, Shafi'i and Hanbali) and the book of rules which each *mujtahid* (religious leader) of Shi'a compiles for the use of his followers, it is laid down, often in minute detail, how the devout Muslim must conduct himself or herself in daily life.[17] The differences between the various schools of law stem from the fact that *hadiths* accepted by one may differ from those accepted by another or the same *hadith* may have given rise to conflicting interpretations.

Although non-maternal nursing was approved by the *Qur'an* and was clearly an accepted and common institution of Islam, legislation laid down in the time of the Muhammad controlled usually those aspects which concerned the family and marriage. A great number of rules are devoted to the prohibited degrees of kinship for marriage because kinship ties dictate the kind of behaviour and social interaction permitted between the sexes. Islamic rulings state that potential marriage partners, referred to as *na-mahram* (whether related or not), may not mix: strict veiling is required on the part of the woman and suitably reserved behaviour on the part of both man and woman. [18]Contravention of these rules can affect the validity of the devout Muslim's daily prayers – that mere looking at a *na-mahram* person while saying their prayers would mean their devotions were nullified and had to be repeated. Those who cannot marry because of a kinship tie – by blood, marriage or milk – referred to as *mahram* relatives, on the other hand, are the men and women who can mix freely: veiling is not required and there is an easy familiarity in the relationship.

The laws which restrict the range of potential marriage partners, almost paradoxically, extend the range of social relationships with the opposite sex experienced by practising Muslims in their lives. In a sense it is this paradox which is being exploited by practising Muslims when they contract 'marriage of convenience' to enable people of the opposite sex to be together without infringing Islamic rulings;[19] and in

the case of milk kinship, deliberately creating a milk relationship for the same purpose or to prevent a marriage which they deem undesirable.[20] A prudent father could thus encourage his child's token suckling with the wife of an unreliable brother or paternal cousin, specifically to preclude claims to marriage between their respective children. Such evasive use of milk kinship — to obviate suspicions of adultery, or to forestall impending marriages between kin groups — were recurrent features of milk kinships in many parts of the medieval Muslim societies.

Maternal Breastfeeding or Wet Nursing?

Most commentators look upon the institution of milk kinship as pre-Islamic and as having its origin in customs prevalent in Arabia, as evidenced, for instance, in the *Qur'an* and the Prophet's biographies. Prophet Muhammad himself was suckled initially by Thuwaibah, a slave of his uncle, Abu Lahab for a brief period, and then, by his Bedouin (Banu Sa'd) foster mother, Halimah.[21] The institution of non-maternal nursing, as it was known before Prophet Muhammad, received the sanction of the new religion of Islam. *Qur'an*'s *verse* 233 of the *sura* 2 (*Al - Baqara* – 'The Cow') allows that '*... if you wish to give your children out to nurse, it is no sin ...*'. [22] Indeed, from medieval *Qur'anic* commentaries one gleans the impression that, later on, wet nursing was practised in vast areas of the Muslim world.[23] The *Qur'an's* approval of wet nurses was understood to mean that no mother could be forced to suckle her baby unless this meant the nursling's health would be endangered. Still, the *Qur'an* and, more explicitly, *Qur'anic* commentators continue to present maternal nursing as always the most natural and therefore preferable way of feeding infants. It tallies fully with the general image in early Islamic sources of mothers as affectionate and full of care towards their children.[24] Medieval *Qur'an* commentator Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d.1209 AD) writes:[25]

> Suckling is not imposed on the mother. The injunction ('those who bear children suckle their children ...' *Qur'an* 2/233) was intended to urge [rather than oblige mother to suckle] since it is more proper for the child to be fostered with his mother's milk than with milk of other women and since a mother's concern (for his well-being) is always more complete than that of other can ever be ....'

The approval of maternal breastfeeding seems to have been unanimous among Muslim doctors. They might have acknowledged the Galenic notions, corroborated in principle by modern medicine, that nature herself planned for children, providing them mother's milk as a moist sustenance. The physiological explanation offered by Galen was that 'while in the uterus we are not nourished by blood, and the source of milk is from blood undergoing a slight change in the breasts'[26] – or, as a modern physician puts it metaphorically, 'the breast has evolved as the umbilical cord of the new born'.[27] The same notion was then repeated in Muslim medical writings, as for instance, in those of Al-Majusi in late tenth century:[28]

> It is due that newborn infant sucks its mother's milk since this is the most appropriate milk for it and most suitable for its nature, provided that there is no disease in the mother to corrupt her milk. This is so because the embryo is fed, while in its mother's womb, by her menstrual blood. When the infant is born, nature moves the blood to the breast, changing it into milk with which it is nourished so as to ensure that ailment it is being fed will be similar to what it was given in the womb.

Beside above warm endorsements Muslim doctors have given to maternal breastfeeding because of the advantages they knew it had for babies and mother alike, we find many detailed chapters in Islamic writings discussing how to choose a wet nurse and even what her conduct of life should be. Muslim physicians were certainly aware not only of the high mortality rates during or shortly after delivery and the common health problems that prevented breastfeeding, but also of the prevalence of divorce and the tendency, as in the Malikite view, among women of the higher social strata to disfavour

breastfeeding. 'Sexual intercourse' was also reflected fatal to the nursling hence some 'men' might have barred their wives from breastfeeding rather than relinquishing their sexual privileges. These practical considerations seemed compelling enough for Muslim doctors to focus to a large extent on wet nursing, the only safe alternative to maternal breastfeeding. Al-Razi describes under what circumstances infants could be handed over to the wet nurses:[29]

> If a woman married another and fulfilling of her duties toward that husband (namely, her duties to have sexual relations with him and to bear him children) prevents her from suckling; if her husband divorced her and she is averse to suckling in order [to remain attractive enough so] that another man will marry her; if she refuses to accept the child with the intention to hurt her former husband for having divorced her and to vex him; if she becomes ill or the flow of her milk stops; [onset of another pregnancy while child was still being breastfed]. In each of these cases, it is permissible to turn from mother to another woman on the condition that a wet nurse can be found and that the child accepts her milk. If not, it is the mother's duty to suckle them.

Maternal breastfeeding and wet nursing were, in fact, the only options recommended by Muslim doctors. A third option was, of course, animal milk, but, with sterilization and pasteurization non-existent, Muslim physicians were well aware of the danger in animals' milk.[30] They acted upon the intuitive and, of course, correct observation that human milk had a high nutritive value and was immunogenic as well. In Europe, the negative attitude towards animal milk we find reflected in both medical theories and popular beliefs until the early nineteenth century—was one of the causes of malnutrition and starvation among infants.[31] It is reasonable to assume that both the difficulty of keeping it fresh and the belief that it transmits traits discouraged Muslim from feeding infants with animal milk. Nonetheless, when they had no choice people did resort to it, as evidenced in Islamic legal sources.

Special care was usually exercised in the choice of a wet nurse or of animal milk, which of course, varies according to social and cultural structure. This was done not only on the grounds that the milk of the nurse or of the animal had inadequate nutritious value, but because of the fear that the child may absorb undesirable mental and personal qualities. Sixteenth-century writer in Britain believed that infants fed on animal milk were 'fierce and not like man', and the practice of direct suckling from an animal, although more widespread in France, was never popular in Britain, where wet nursing was the rule among the wealthy, at least until the late nineteenth century.[32] The poorer English women did breastfeed their children often with explicitly contraceptive intention and had longer birth intervals, fewer and healthier children as apposed to their richer sisters. Among the poor – in case mother failed to breastfeed – hand-feeding with animal milk or pap was always preferred to direct suckling.

Juridical Reckoning of Islamic Milk Kinship

All three forms of relationship in Islam by blood (*nasab*), affinity (*mushara*), and milk (*rida'a*) involve an impediment to marriage between certain persons by virtue of the *Qur'an* and the prophetic traditions. *Verse* 23 of *sura* 4 (*Al- Nisa* –'The Woman') reads:[33]

> Prohibited to you (for marriage) are: 'your mothers, daughters, sister's daughters; foster-mothers (who gave you suck), foster sisters; your wives' mothers; your step-daughters under your guardianship, born of your wives to whom ye have gone in, no prohibition if ye have not gone in; (those who have been) wives of your sons proceeding from your loins; and two sisters in wedlock at one and the same time, except of what is past; for Allah is the forgiving, most Merciful; also (prohibited are) women already married, except those whom your right hands possess: Thus hath Allah ordained (prohibitions) against you'.

I

According to the *hadiths,* the general rule stipulates that the incestuous or forbidden (*narawa*) marriages between relatives by *rida'a* are the same that apply to relative by *nasab*. That can be derived from the Prophet's saying: 'what is forbidden as a result of blood relationships is forbidden as a result of milk relationships as well (*fa-innahu yuharramu min (a) 'l-radā' mā yuharramu min(a) 'l-nasab*)'.[34] I also refer to the following prophetic traditions:

(a) It is narrated by Aisha (Prophet's wife) that the Prophet upon the approval of entry of Hafsa's uncle by reason of fosterage said: 'Fosterage makes unlawful what consanguinity *makes unlawful'.*[35]

(b) Aisha narrated that the Prophet said that it was permissible for me to allow Aflah who was my foster-uncle to enter the house of the Prophet.[36]

(c) Sayyidina Ali narrates that the Prophet said while I suggested to the Prophet that he may marry the daughter of Hamzah, the Prophet refused and said that she is the daughter of his milk brother, and therefore it would be unlawful for him.[37]

(d) Um Habiba narrates that I proposed to the Prophet that he may marry the daughter of Abu Salama, thereupon the Prophet in refusing my proposal said that her father is my foster-brother [both; Prophet and Abu Salama were suckled by Thuwaibah] and she is my niece.[38]

As is well known, Islamic prohibitions of close kin marriage are comparatively frugal in order to accommodate traditional Arab preferences of agnatic endogamy. Prohibited natal kin

(*nasab*) are basically restricted to lineal ascendants and descendants, together with the spouses of these kin and a spouse's lineal kin, related by affinity (*mushara*).[39] Prohibited marital relations by *rida'a* milk kinship is similarly restricted in principle:[40]

> Apart from 'milk-siblings' – those who have suckled from the same nurse or 'milk-mother' – the lineal kin and affines of this nurse and of her husband or 'milk-father' are prohibited spouses, together with the milk-parents and milk-siblings of lineal ascendants and descendants, the milk-child of a sibling, and the child of a milk-sibling. A spouse's milk kin are also treated as that spouse's natal kin, becoming prohibited *mushara* affines by milk kinship.

These 'adoptive' relatives constitute what Altorki calls the 'core range' of milk kinswomen for a male child,[41] those whose classification with close cognatic kinswomen (defined as *mahram*) allowed a man relaxed liberties of familiar address and intimacy with women who would otherwise be secluded according to conventions of sexual honour in Islam.[42] Honorific extensions of such familiar address and intimacy with more distant milk kinswomen might have been negotiable; but there is no evidence that jural impediments on marriage by milk kinship extended beyond the nursing family prior to Muhammad's *Qur'anic* revelations. These also narrowly specified prohibitions on men's marriage: with '*those who are your mothers by having suckled you and those who are your sisters by suckling*' (*Qur'an sura* 4/23). G.H. Stern assumes that 'while it may have been a pre-Islamic custom in Makkah for a man not to marry his milk-mother or sister, it was apparently permissible for him to marry any of his milk-relatives'.[43] This means that while the *Qur'an* confirmed an existing usage, it was the *hadith* which added a new Islamic element to the legislation in regard to impediments to marriage stemming from non-maternal wet nursing – postulating a connection between the nurse's milk and her husband's semen.

II

Muslim jurists in their collections of *furu al-fiqh* (positive law), *fatawa* (opinions of points of law) and *nawazil* (real life cases and the way they resolved them) from the eighth-ninth centuries A.D. onwards devoted long and detailed discussions on wet nursing.[44] As the *hadith* and *shari'ya* aspired to totality and comprehensiveness, the fact that the *Qur'an* had already touched upon this issue – albeit only in the context of divorce and impediments to marriage – was sufficient reason to begin elaborating it further. Although there are broad agreements among jurists on the moralities of milk kinship, their documented discussions, however, reveal many differences of opinion in specific details, particularly between the four Sunni schools; amongst the Shi'a *mujtahid* there appears little disagreement. For milk kinship to become a ground for marital prohibition, it must fulfill certain essential conditions agreed upon by majority Muslim juristconsultants; a brief account of which follows:

(a) The majority of the jurists are of the opinion that the milk must be from female human beings, who was at time of sucking not, less than nine years old, the minimum age of puberty.

(b) The milk must get into the baby's stomach, whether by way of suckling or drinking from a cup or a bottle.

(c) Breastfeeding can be through suckling by way of nostril.

(d) It must not be mixed with other substances. However, if it is mixed with other substances, the rule of preponderance would be applicable, i.e., if the quantity of human milk is greater than the other substance(s).

(e) The suckling must take place during the first two years of the infant's life. This is a unanimous opinion held by a majority of Muslim jurists.

(f) To make complete the times of suckling, jurists are divided; Shafies and Hanabilah are generally of the view that it must be (least) five times suckling, while Hanafies and Malikis held that it does not matter whether it is a minimum or bigger degree of suckling.

(g) The milk of a dead woman does not create the milk relationship.

(h) The suckling should be vouched for by a number of reliable people who are known to be honest and of good reputation.

Likewise, in Shi'ite Islam, the rules of milk kinship were developed along more or less the same lines as in the Sunni law. The discussion of marriage prohibitions incurred through milk kinship in the writing of such contemporary Shi'ite religious authorities as Khomeini, Khoyi, Khonsiri and Shahrestani, reveals, however, some differences. For instance, according to the Khomeini, a minimum of fifteen suckling sessions (Sunni, ten or five) in successions are needed to create a milk relationship between a nursling and a non-maternal nurse, and the milk must be suckled at the breast. Moreover, it is recommended that the wet nurse be a practising Twelve Imami Shi'a Muslim.[17] Nevertheless, Shi'ite religious scholars, like their Sunni counterparts, were well aware of the complex Islamic legislation concerning breastfeeding and its social implications.

III

In essence, the *Qur'an* mentions milk mothers and milk sisters amongst those with whom a man may not have sexual relations – 'Forbidden to you are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your parental aunts, brother's daughters, sister's daughters, those who are your mothers by having suckled you, those who are your sisters by suckling (*wa-ummahātukum(u)*

'llāti arda'nakum wa-akhawā tukum min(a) 'l-radā'a...' (*sura* 4, al-Nisā' – 'The Women', *verse* 23).[18] In doing so, the *Qur'an* adds a unique element – which may have been rooted in pre-Islamic Arabic custom – to a long Semitic tradition of prohibitions of marriage, actually extending the range of incest much beyond the way it is defined in Judaism and Christianity. Implicit here is the notion, also found in Greek medical thought, that the milk of a nursing woman is formed from the blood of her womb, and therefore ties created by suckling are like ties of kinship. There are *hadith* reports which develop this idea even further, postulating a connection between the nurse's milk and her husband's semen. However, nowhere in the *Qur'an*, nor for that matter in *Qur'an* commentaries, we find an explanation of why this marriage prohibition are formed. Though exemplifying how this *Qur'anic* injunction was later dramatically widened, *Qur'an* exegetes leave us without any clue as to the social and intellectually developments which could have motivated the complex elaborations we encounter in *hadith* and *fiqh* writings.

Qur'an commentators, on the whole, explain the concerned verses as intended to duplicate for milk relationships the lists of those blood relatives with whom a Muslim man is forbidden to contract marriage. Viewed in the light of the *Qur'an* 4/23, the ruling is understood to mean that to the list of women a man is forbidden to marry because of milk kinship are now added his milk niece (maternal and paternal), milk aunt, milk daughter, and the milk mother of his wife. It was also forbidden for a man to be married to or own simultaneously two women who were milk sisters.

Since antiquity wet nursing was regarded as the only safe alternative when maternal breastfeeding was out of question. By enabling it to form the basis for a complex and ramified network of impediments to marriage, Islamic law made wet nursing play an important role in much wider circles of social life. It influenced the way in which relations between different

families were established, probably led to a reduction in the endogamous marriages, allowed women greater freedom of conduct by creating semi-private spaces. The following *hadith* may serve as illustration: Aisha (Prophet's wife) is said to have arranged for Salim Ibn Abdullah (when he was a baby) to be suckled by her sister, Umma Kulthum, clearly with the idea that when he grew up, she would be allowed to have free and open social contact with him.[47] Hafsa (Prophet's another wife), is reported to have sent Asim bin Abdullah to her sister Fatima, guaranteeing that she would have free access to him in years to come.[48] *Hadith* traditions clearly indicate a common manipulative deployment of milk kinship as a means of evading *hijab* seclusion. But its extensive elaboration on analogy with natal kinship may also be ascribed to its strategic affiliative role as a substitute to jural adoption (*tabanni*) after this was proscribed by *Qur'anic* revelation. A majority of instances of milk kinship cited in early *hadith* traditions served so as to broaden the network of relatives on whom one could trust for support and assistance. This group of *hadith* reports more clearly reflects the emerging strategy whereby early Muslim believers were encouraged to seek their marriage partner beyond the boundaries of their own patrilineal-patrilocal extended families so as to consolidate a community that would be not only larger than one based solely on blood ties, but also inspired by a shared world view and common aims. Thus, milk kinship in the context of Islamic jurisprudence, is a complex and elaborates legal institution, the subject of considerable debate and varied opinion. While much of this legal debate may seem abstruse, milk kinship had, and continues to have, a social reality outside the scholastic domain. It was common, in the pre-modern Muslim societies, for women living in the same household or locale to breastfeed each other's infants as need and convenience required. Urban, upper-class women frequently had recourse to the services of professional wet nurses. Milk relations were thus also perforce common,

although it seems hard to believe that the full ramifications of the jurisprudential schemes were followed through: certainly contemporary ethnographic accounts suggest that popular conceptions of the extent of milk relations are often at odds with those of jurisprudence. In recent times, due to comprehensive transformation and a soaring speed of mobility, the expression of affinity is no longer the lone model for accommodating dealings. Moreover, the residence patterns have altered, with a decline in large, mixed households and the advent of artificial baby milks has rendered wet nursing an alternative rather than inevitability. Beside this, the social customs themselves have become less austere so that the formation of a milk bond for the intention of avoiding otherwise obligatory veiling has vanished its connotation.

NOTES

1. The word *Radā'a* or *Ridā'a* is derived from the root word *Rade'a*, which means suckling, such as saying that a mother is suckling her baby. For general overview, see *Hadith–Translation of Imam Malik's Al-Muwatta*, Book 30, '*Suckling*', available at http:// www.ummah.net/Al_adaab/hadith/muwatta/; *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Muhammad Muhsin Khan, 9 vols, New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1987, Vol. VII, Book 62, '*Nikāh*'; *Sahih Muslim by Imam Muslim,* trans. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, 8 vols, New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2008, Vol.IV, Book 17, *'Fosterage or 'Kitab al-Radā'a*'; *The Hedaya*, *or Guide, a Commentary on the Muslim Laws*, trans. C. H. Hamilton, Book 3, '*Riza* or Fosterage', Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1994 [1870], pp. 67-72; *Encyclopaaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hasting, Vol. IV, pp. 104-09; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* ed. C. E. Bosworth et al., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995, Vol. VIII, pp. 361-62; *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam,* ed. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961, pp. 463-64.
2. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IV, pp. 104-09.
3. *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. VII, pp. 24-25; *Malik's Al-Muwatta*, Book 30, Number 30.1.1. See also Fakhr al-Din Al Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, Cairo: 1862, Commentary on *Qur'an*, 4/23. For secondary work, see N.J. Coulson, *Succession in the Muslim Family*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, p.14.
4. 'Milk belongs to the husband...' in *Sahih Al- Bukhari*, Vol. VII, p.27; see R.K. Wilson, *Digest of Anglo-Muhammadan Law*, ed. A. Yusuf Ali, London:

Thacker & Co., 1921, p.57. Also see *Chapters on Marriage and Divorce: Response of Ibn Hanbal and Rahwah*, trans. Susan A. Spectorsky, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993, pp. 106-11.

5. Several eastern Christian churches also recognized milk kinship as an impediment to marriage and used it, along with other 'fictitious' kinship ties such as *gossipred* to prevent intermarriage. It remains ambiguous to me whether they adopted this custom from their Muslim neighbours or it predates Islam.
6. Peter Parkes, 'Milk Kinship Allegiance in Former Mountain Kingdoms of Northern Pakistan', pp. 4-36; idem, 'Fostering Fealty: A Comparative Analysis of Tributary Allegiances of Adoptive Kinship', pp. 741-82.
7. Hammel, *Alternative Social Structures*, p. 4.
8. Hammel, *Alternative Social Structures*, pp. 31, 87.
9. S.W. Mintz and E.R. Wolf, 'An Analysis of Ritual Co-parenthood (*compadrazgo*)', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 6 (1950), pp. 341-68.
10. In Europe, the prohibitions that governed conjugal relations from the middle ages until early modern times were one reason why many husbands discouraged maternal breastfeeding and were in favour of handing their newborn infants over to wet nurses. Sexual intercourse was forbidden for the entire nursling period (16-24 months), believed that it would 'weaken and corrupt' breast milk. See Ole Jorgen Benedictow, 'On the Origin and Spread of the Notion that Breast-feeding Women Should Abstain from Sexual Intercourse', *Scandinavian Journal of History,* 17 (1992), pp. 73-76; See also Dorothy Mclaren, 'Nature's Contraceptive: Wet-nursing and Prolonged Lactation, *Medical History*, 23(1979), pp.426-41.

    The Prophet is said to have married Umm Salama while she was still nursing the infant she had conceived by her late husband Abu Salama, but to have been incapable of consummating the marriage as long as his new wife was nursing her baby daughter – consummation only followed after the nursling had been handed over to a wet nurse. However, whether this was because the Prophet was aware sexual relations with a nursing woman could cause harm to the nursling or because the very presence of the baby suckling at her mother's breast formed some kind of obstacle remains unclear. See Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* p. 32.
11. *The Works of Aristotle, Vol. IV: Historia Animalium*, ed. J.A. Smith and W.D. Ross, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910, p. 587 b; see also *Soranus' Gynecology*, p.90; *A Translation of Galen's 'Hygiene'*, trans. R.M. Green, Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1951, p.29. For the Arab medicine, Galen and, to a lesser extent, Hippocrates (460-370 BC), were their most significant sources of inspiration, while for gynecology we also find the influence of Soranus. It's interesting to note that Soranus' writing compiled at the beginning of the second century AD was never translated into Arabic, but some of his theories found their way into the Muslim works, see Manfred Ullmann, *Islamic*

Medicine, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978.

12. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, London: Charles and Black, 1903 [1885], p.196 (n.1).
13. *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. VII, pp. 26-27.
14. *Shari'ya* (Śarī'ah) is the dynamic body of Islamic religious law. The term means 'way' or 'path to the water source'; it is the legal framework within which the public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Muslim principles of jurisprudence.
15. The *Qur'an* (*al-qur'ān*, literally 'the recitation'; also sometimes transliterated *Qur'an*, *Koran*, or *Al-Qur'an*) is the central religious text of Islam. Muslims believe the *Qur'an* to be the book of divine guidance and direction for mankind and consider the text in its original Arabic to be the literal word of Allah, revealed to Muhammad by Gabriel over a period of 23 years and view the *Qur'an* as God's final revelation to humanity.
16. *Hadith* (*al-ḥadīth*) are oral traditions relating to the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad. *Hadith* collections are regarded important tools for determining the *Sunnah*, or Muslim way of life, by all traditional school of jurisprudence. The Arabic plural is *aḥdīth*. In English academic usage, *hadith* is often both singular and plural.
17. For a clear exposition of the differences between Shi'a and Sunni Islam, see J. N. Hollister, *The Shi'a of India*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1979.
18. The *Qur'ān* ordered (24/31) 'believing women' to 'throw their scarves over their bosoms and not show their ornament except to their husbands or their fathers or the father of their husbands or to their sons or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters', etc. (uncles are not mentioned here although *Qur'an* 4/23 prohibits marriage with nieces), *Qur'an* 24/31, trans. Bell, Vol.I, p.339.
19. For. e.g., servants in households of the devout Shi'a Muslims were made into *mahram* relatives by means of temporary marriage contracts. The servant was married to the son or daughter of the head of household, often an infant who would know nothing about what was being done in his/her name. The servant then became like a son-or-daughter-in-law to the household head and to the other members of the family. This permitted practising Muslims to carry out their devotions with a clear conscience in the presence of servants of the opposite sex. Furthermore, it also permitted a female servant to attend to her work without being strictly veiled in front of the male members of the households, which would have hindered her efficiency. See Khatib-Chahidi, 'Sexual Prohibitions, Shared Space and Fictive Marriages in Shi'ite Iran', in Ardener, *Women and Space*, pp. 114-16,125-27.
20. Altorki, 'Milk Kinship in Arab Society', pp. 240-41.
21. Rodinson, *Muhammad: Prophet of Islam*, p.44. See also Stern, *Marriage in Early Islam*, p. 96.
22. Richard Bell, *The Qur'an: Translated with Critical Re-arrangement of the*

Suras, 2 vols, Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 1970 [1939], Vol. I, p. 33. See Aliah Schleifer, *Motherhood in Islam*, Cambridge: The Islamic Academy, 1986, p. 68. Al-Tabari does comment that there is no sin on the parents if they give the child to an affectionate wet nurse, in a situation where they do not feel that the weaning of the child would be healthy for it and the mother is prevented from nursing due to her weakness, illeness or some other valid excuse.Al-Tabari, *Jami'Al-Bayan 'An Ta'wil Aiy Al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Mustafa Al-Bana Al-Halabi, 1968, Vol. II, p. 509. See also Al-Qurtabi, *Al-Jami Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Dar Al-Katib Al-Misriyyah, 1967, Vol. III, p. 161. Ibn Kathir adds that mother should not relinquish the new-born infant until she has given him the first milk which flows, the drinking of which is necessary for him to survive. After that she can relinquish him if she wishes, but if it is in order to harm his father, then that is not permissible, just as it is not permissible for the father to take the child from her merely to cause harm to her. Ibn Kathir, *Tasfir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim*, Egypt: Dar Ihya' Al-Kutub Al-'Arabiyyah, Vol. I, p. 284.

23. *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'ān: A Summarized Version of the Al-Tabri, Al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir with Comments from Sahih Al-Bukhari,* trans. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Delhi: Royal Publishers, 1995, part-I, p.148. See Al-Razi's (*Mafatih Al-Ghayb*) and Al-Tabri's (*Jami Al-Bayan an Ta'wil ay Al-Qur'ān*, Cairo: 1884, 1903,1955) commentaries on *Qur'ān*, *Sura* 65, *Verse* 6 (65/6), (*Al-Talaq* – 'Divorce') and *Sura* 2, *Verse* 233 (2/233), (*Al-Baqara* – 'The Cow').
24. See Schleifer, *Motherhood in Islam*, pp. 47-48, 70. For that matter, philosopher and moralists such as Pliny, Plutarch, Tacitus, and Aulus Gellius were strongly in favour of mothers of all classes feeding their own babies. In addition to the physiological advantages of maternal breastfeeding, they emphasized that if children were given to a wet nurse then the bond of affection and love between mother and child would wither, possibly building up problems in later life.
25. Al Razi's Commentary on *Qur'ān*, 2/233.
26. *A Translation of Galen's Hygiene*, p.24.
27. R.V. Short, 'Lactation–The Central Control of Reproduction', in *Breastfeeding and the Mother*, (Symposium), Oxford: 1976, p.73.
28. Al-Majusi, *Kamil al-Sina'a'l-Tibbiya*, Bulaq: 1877, Vol. II, p. 56; Avicenna, *The General Principle of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine*, pp. 286-87.
29. Al Razi's Commentary on *Qur'an* , 2/233.
30. Shulamit Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages,* London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 53-54.
31. Matthews Grieco, 'Breastfeeding, Wet Nursing and Infant Mortality in Europe (1400-1800)', in *Historical Perspectives on Breastfeeding*, pp. 21-22. It was not until 1890s that the first centre for distributing (pasteurized) animal milk to infants opened its doors in Paris.
32. Fildes, *Breast, Bottle and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding*, p. 271.

33. Bell, *The Qur'an*, Vol.I, pp. 71-72.
34. *The Holy Qur'an*, text, translation and commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1997 [1784], p.191; Al-Razi's Commentary on *Qur'an*, 4/23.
35. *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* Vol. VII, pp. 24-25; *Sahih Muslim,* Vol. IV, p. 378. See also *Malik's Al-Muwatta,* Book 30, Number 30.3.15.
36. *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. VII, p.27.
37. *Sahih Muslim,* Vol. IV, pp. 378-79.
38. *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. VII, p.26.
39. Prohibited *nasab* kin also include descendants of parents and children of grandparents (from plural marriages). Supplementary prohibitions against concurrent marriage with a woman and her sister, as with her *nasab* cognatic kinswomen or *mushara* female affines, were subsequently extended to two 'milk-sisters' and thence equivalent kinswomen related by *rida'a* milk kinship. See Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet nurses*, pp. 24-25.
40. Altorki, 'Milk Kinship in Arab Society', pp. 235-37. The marriage between close relatives may result in physical and mental deficiency in their offspring was an awareness also reflected in some early Muslim sources, for e.g., Qasim Shihab Sabbah, *'Ilm al-Nafs al-Nabawiyy*, Beirut: 1995, p. 119 cited in Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*, p.29.
41. Altorki, 'Milk Kinship in Arab Society', p. 236.
42. Stern, *Marriage in Early Islam*, pp. 95-103.
43. Stern, *Marriage in Early Islam*, p.98.
44. Al-Sarakhsi, the most prominent Hanafi jurisconsult in Transoxania in the eleventh century AD, opens the chapter on the hiring of wet nurse in his *Kitab al-Mabsut*, with the assumption that babies are able to grow up on human milk only, ostensibly excluding the option of animal milk or even other foods. Shams al-Din al Al-Sarakhsi, *Kitab al-Mabsut*, Cairo: 1905-06. See also *The General Principle of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine*, pp. 286-87;
45. Khatib-Chahidi, 'Milk kinship in Shi'ite Islamic Iran', pp. 116-17.
46. *The Holy Qur'an*, p.191.
47. *Qur'ān*, 33/53, 55; *Malik's Al-Muwatta*, Book 30, Nummber 30.1.7. See also Barbara Freyer-Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions and Interpretation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 90-91. The scheme was later abandoned due to Umma Kulthum's illness, after third session.
48. *Malik's Al-Muwatta*, Book 30, Nummber 30.1.8.

CHAPTER-4

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WET NURSES IN MUGHAL EMPIRE

When social ties are put to the test, proverbs affirm, those of consanguinity usually prevail: 'Blood is thicker than water'; or as Arabic Muslims put it, 'Blood is thicker than milk'. These enigmatic adages refer to former institutions of 'adoptive' kinship in western Eurasia, contrasting the blood of natal kinship with the water of baptism or 'spiritual kinship' in Christendom, and with infant fosterage or 'milk kinship' in Islam. The epigraph 'thicker than blood' argues that the nurture of 'non-biogenetic kinship' may match or supersede natal kinship, just as Islamic 'milk kinship' or infant fosterage was supposed to create a cognation superior to that of mere flesh and blood. The present chapter explores kinship networks which were extended to form a new extra-kin community where 'milk' becomes *raison d'etre* for the formation of intimate relationships. A new idea of consanguinity was built in and around practices such as wet nursing and notions of 'fostering' – hitherto the object of scant scholarly attention. Many-sided participation of nurses in affairs of the monarchy primarily in medieval period shows how these new relationships and communities had shaped, and continued to shape, the notion of family, kinship and the court politics. It examines some of the normative examples associated with these relationships from Mughal chronicles, which is illuminating not only for what it tells us about wet nursing practices – selection and background of nurses, their virtues, hierarchy among nurses by dint of feeding the high class child – but also

for the affinal links that help to visualize the power paradigm of that time.

Bonds of Breast Milk

Infant 'fosterage' in pre-modern Eurasia was usually acknowledged with consanguineal kinship created by suckling breastmilk, as is recognized in Islamic law. Islam considered kinship created by delegated suckling fully equivalent to consanguinity. We can trace the roots of this notion from Aristotle, Soranus and Galen, who have considered breast milk a 'purified refinement of a woman's uterine blood' that had been heated, coagulated, and whitened, and so by ingesting it, a blood relationship is created. In all periods of history, the close ties of love and affection established at the breast during infancy were freely acknowledged. In ancient Greek and Roman societies, many epitaphs, statues and grave *steles* survive, erected by grateful and mourning adults to the memory of their beloved nurse.[1]

Breastfeeding may inform a universalist ethos: 'the milk of human kindness', in contrast to a restrictive one: 'blood is thicker than water' or 'blood is thicker than milk'. Al-Tabari, a tenth-century Arab chronicler and *Qur'anic* commentator, cited many warm comments of the Prophet Muhammad concerning the generosity of motherhood and the debt of children to their breastmilk. The following *hadith* explains the importance of mother's task which was rewarded in heaven: [2]

> Narrated Anas: Salama, the nurse of his son Ibrahim [who died at the age of sixteenth months], said to the Prophet: O messenger of Allaha, you have brought tidings of all good things to men but not to women. He said: Did your women friends put you up to asking me this question? She said: Yes, they did. He said: Does it not which please any one of you that if she is pregnant by her husband and he is satisfied with that, she receives the reward of one who fasts and prays for the sake of Allaha? And when her labour pain come no one in the heaven or earth knows what is concealed in her womb to delight her? And when she

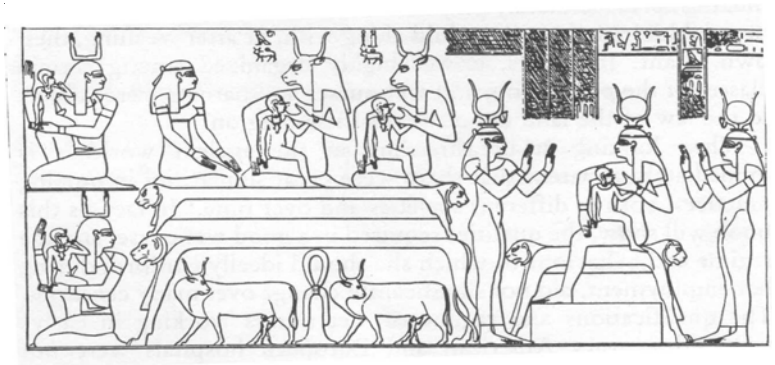
delivers, not a mouthful of milk flows from her, and not a suck does she give, but that she receives, for every mouthful and for every suck, the reward of one good deed. And if she is kept awake by her child at night, she receives the reward of one who frees seventy slaves for the sake of Allaha.

Patterns of Infant Feeding

In ancient and medieval societies – neither bottles nor formulas milk were available – the best two ways to nourish an infant were with its own mother's milk and with the milk of a lactating woman who is not its mother – a wet nurse (*murdi'ā* in *Qur'an*, denotes in general 'suckling female' 22/2,28/12,65/6). Al-Sarakhsi, the most prominent Hanafi jurisconsult in Transoxania in the eleventh century AD, opens the chapter on the hiring of wet nurses in his *Kitab al-Mabsut* ('The Extended Book [of Law]') with the assumption – shared by contemporary medical doctors – that babies are able to grow up on human milk only, ostensibly excluding the option of animal milk or even other foods.[3] Yahya B. Sharaf al-Nawawi, the Syrian Shafite jurisconsult of the thirteenth century AD, also holds that animal milk is 'ineffective' and less beneficial for the infant's body than human milk.[4] Nevertheless, when they had no choice people did resort to it.[5] This is also understandable if we take into account that the early Arabs (like other nomads) considered animal milk (mainly from camel, goat and sheep) as a basic foodstuff, highly appreciated for its nutritious value, not to mention that as a literary symbol milk stands for the purity of Islam. The tradition and the connected sentiment indubitably grew up among other nomadic tribes such as Turko-Tatar, to whom Mughals drew their origin, under conditions of life broadly not dissimilar to those which obtained over most of Arabia.

The breastfeeding of child by non-maternal mother is mentioned in some of the oldest surviving texts which denote

that the practice was well established in ancient times.[6] Socio-political and religious factors had played an important role in determining the incidence and extent of professional breastfeeding in different societies throughout history. In some civilizations, wet nursing occurred mainly on a casual basis: where lactating relatives or neighbours fed another child along with, or after weaning, their own infant. In others, it was highly organized among certain classes of the population, and wet nurses and parents were subject to the law of the land or to that of their religion.[7] In most societies, since beginning lactating women, whether mother or wet nurses, were held in high regard and numerous images survive of mother goddesses either holding or suckling an infant. These were thought to protect children during and after childbirth: for example, the goddess Ishtar in Mesopotamia and the goddess Isis in Ancient Egypt. The Egyptians worshipped the cow as a sacred animal of Hathor, goddess of heaven, who was seen as the symbol of motherhood and is frequently depicted in human or bovine form giving suck to both calves and children. In Egyptian domestic scene, a wet nurse is often shown as a goddess Hathor: in human form but with the head of the cow.



Wet nurses' room in the birth-house of Ancient Egyptian temple. Note that two wet nurses in the centre have the cow's heads which represents the goddess Hathor.[10]

Wet nurses were used extensively in Greek and Roman empires almost exclusively by royalty and the highly born. It was considered undignified for a reputable women to act as a nurse to her child. Nursing was premeditated a lower class function, a servant's job, whereas employing a wet nurse was a sign of gentility, a hallmark of prestige and social respectability which both mother and father felt obliged to live up to. Moreover, the higher her social rank, the more delicate her constitution was supposed to be and the less it was expected to withstand the demand of lactation. As breastfeeding was believed to be debilitating for weak constitution, country wet nurses were employed to suckle imperial babies. The poverty status of country/or rural women were compensated by a supposedly superior health and a more abundant flow of milk.[9]

In Medieval period, wet nursing had become so popular norm for imperial and wealthy family that one who nursed her own child was worthy of comment. Wet nurses were utterly used in imperial Mughal family. Unlike Europeans and Arabs, live-in wet nurse was the norm. A wet nurse would be asked to mind her diet and behaviour with special restrictions on sex;[10] her duties, besides breastfeeding, often consisted of caring for, and sometimes providing preliminary instruction for the child. Lethargic and disbelieved wet nurses could be lashed or executed, but loyal and intimate ones could bring themselves and their family material and honorary rewards. Modern-day absorption of a mother's psychological 'bonding' with her new-born child was not a matter of great concern for imperial families. Moreover imperial women during that period mainly were often little more than symbolic figures, delivering child after child to secure a dynasty.[11] It was particularly important in times of high infant and child mortality and,[12] whiles the notion that breastfeeding had a contraceptive effect was quite prevalent.[13] In general rich mothers of that time were 'tied to perpetual pregnancy and the poor mothers to perpetual suckling'. Poor women then did breastfeed their children often

with explicitly contraceptive intention and so had longer birth intervals, fewer and healthier children as opposed to their richer sisters.

Study in Social Relations

Quite evidently, the survival of infants depended upon lactating women when alternatives to human milk were inadequate or unknown; therefore, it is not difficult to understand why, in many ancient and medieval societies, wet nurses were held in high regard, particularly those employed by the wealthier members of society. In some societies, rulers claimed that they were suckled by divine wet nurses whilst, in others, the wet nurses of kings might be deified.[14] In other words, the nursing act itself gets more sanctified because of its association with the heavenly child. Abul Fazl, in his monumental history of the Mughal Empire the *Akbar Nama,* records that they had to be 'even tempered, spiritually-minded' nurses from whose breasts infant Akbar's 'mouth was sweetened by the life-giving fluid'.[15] Abul Fazl substantiated that Akbar imbibed varied *masharib* (dispositions of nurse milk),[16] and *vujud* (essence and substance)[17] from the milk of his (*qawabil-i-ruḥani-qawalib*) spiritual moulded cherishers [means both; a wet nurse and a mid-wife]. Sufistic overtones interlace in his description of the act of feeding, institutes the exceptional privileges of the nurse. Unneeded to mention that the Sufi lineage of the Chishtis had had long ties to the Mughal family and Chishti saints had been venerated in the imperial household from the time of Babur. Emperor Jahangir had also been tied from birth to adore Shaikh Salim, who held an especial important place in Chishti hagiography for the Mughals – and had grown up there in the company of many of the *shaikh's* descendants, to whom we shall turn again below.[18] Moral commitments were sanctified in the ritual idiom of 'sacred breastfeeding' by which oaths of loyalty were sworn. Milk child was expected to give life-long

protection to their nurses, who conversely offered even their lives in prosecuting the internecine feuds of royal families. For example, in 1547 AD, *Angah* (Maham Angah, dry nurse) merrily offered her very life at Kabul for the sake of her foster child Akbar when Kamran's combating against Humayun endangered his life.[19] In his early years, the child prince forged close friendships with the children and wards of his *angah*s. The prince and his *kokah*s shared the entire range of sibling relations, from rivalry to love, framed by unquestioned brotherly bonds that were rooted in shared childhood memories. The relationship also played a prominent role in pacifying the blood feuds, as a Muslim says allegorically that 'there is no power stronger than a mother's milk' which could 'wash clean' the bloodshed of vengeance through infant fosterage, for 'blood is washed away by a mother's milk, but never has blood mixed with milk'. One who 'mixed milk with blood' – defying the prescriptive amity of milk kinship with inappropriate enmities of blood-vengeance – would be outlawed by family and kin, just as incest with milk kin or 'profanation of the breast' was punished by outlawing or execution.

The ill-defined role and institution of Mughal wet nurse (*angah* in Chaghtay Turk; *dayah* in Persian and *zi'r* in Arabic)[20] provided a vital conduit for political and social change. *Angahs* became a locus of affection. They gained prestige in court as they and their kin became responsible for raising imperial princes. With these responsibilities came opportunities to acquire wealth and gain access to the throne, which translated into political power. Ties to wet nurses did not invariably supersede direct kinship ties, but they remained a significant mechanism of political, social, and emotional allegiance. The role of the wet nurse helped forge durable hierarchical relations between low-ranking nobles and their superiors, and this social structure pervades the court and the provinces. If we take the example of dynastic histories of medieval period, it was the court rather than provincial society that provided the initial template for

changes in social custom. Nurses and their families thrived because the social hierarchy of the court, though it enshrined hereditary privileges, did not ensure that talented individuals could participate in governance. Through devoted and skilled services, nurses and their families won the trust of emperors and other influential courtiers. In addition, the proximity between a wet nurse and her 'milk-child' meant that she and her immediate relatives' maintained easy access to her ward even after he became an adult. As their prestige grew, wet nurses received increasingly substantial rewards for their services. The sons and daughters of the nurse became increasingly visible and received important posts. This proved to be a ready source of political influence. Mughal sources are abounding in praises of '*kokaltash's*'[21] loyal services. The powers and prerogatives that had accumulated to an emperor's wet nurse were not hogged by any one member of her family but were dispersed to a coterie of kinsfolks. For instance, powerful Central Asian *Atgah khyal* (family) was one of the most loyal supporters of Akbar's reign, served both in the capital and as provincial governors.[22] During a rebellion led by nobles and officers of Central Asian origin in 1580, members of the Atgah clan remained faithful.

The formative function of the milk was related to the menstrual blood from which the child was birthed; that is, the blood that was involved in conception and nurturing of the child in the womb was viewed since antiquity as relocating and transforming into breast milk.[23] The conventional wisdom that one's character is derived from the milk that nourishes one in infancy was widespread in the Mughal world, which inspired chroniclers to lists several bodily attributes that should be logged when selecting a wet nurse. Honored names of the 'blissful nurses and spiritually moulded cherishes'[24] were carefully chosen. The nurture of a child at a woman's breast fundamentally is a subject of considerable cultural elaboration. For anthropologists it is an aspect of 'mothering' the culturally constructed bonding between mother and child. Mughal

chronicles have mentioned many tangible references which help us to illustrate milk relationships notably in considering how multiform relationships were established during that period.While Mughal imperial records concentrated mostly on the actions of male such vignettes placed politically astute and influential women close to the ranks of their more prominent masculine contemporaries.

Milk Kinship Allegiances

Blood kin ties in medieval period were an inadequate basis for political allegiance. Within Mughal literature, we find the following response: '*... brotherly custom has nothing to do with ruling and reigning. If you whish to be emperor put brotherly sentiment aside ... This is no brother! This is your majesty foe*!'[25] Mughal sources are full of such references that revealed that most nobles chose their heirs from the ablest among their progeny, which encouraged competition among siblings – commonly known to the general readers of Mughal history. Brothers and cousins were eligible for the same offices, and hence almost invariably became rivals. It was the rare man who could fully trust his biological relatives. In addition, with rank came personal restrictions: the court proved so formalized that parents could not easily meet sons who had achieved high rank. Nevertheless, the tie between wet nurses and their charges was hierarchical, encompassing as well as more binding than the other kinship ties. A nurse doted on her charge and was concerned for his welfare in a way that his parents could not be, because his achievements could translate into unprecedented wealth, power, and prestige for her and her family.

Although the number of wet nurses for each ward and their prerogatives were not standardized, yet the custom of using multiple wet nurses remained common at least for imperial princes. Undoubtedly, suckling in some cases was largely symbolic or gestural, yet the categorical relationship of

collective milk siblingship with imperial princes was indubitably genuine. Abul Fazl in *Akbar Nama* mentions names of ten wet nurses and one dry nurse for infant Akbar, some would actually suckle the child for a period of time, but others who were designated nurses, such as Maham Angah for infant Akbar, may have put the infant symbolically to the breast only for a short time.[26] Jahangir himself says that venerable Shaikh Salim Chishti's (d.1572) daughter-in-law, mother of infant Shaikh Bayazid, had been the 'first person who gave me milk, but not for more than a day';[27] afterward he was suckled by several wet nurses, amid them conspicuously celebrated in contemporary chronicles is Qutub-ud Din's mother (daughter of Shaikh Salim) as Jahangir says on her death in 1606 AD: 'I have not so much affection for my own mother, and I do not hold (Qutub-ud Din) less dear than my own brother and children'.[28] Not surprisingly, the ways the corporal and psychosomatic meanings of breastfeeding have been conceptualized differ from one society to another or even from one social group to another. Mughal royal infants too were usually wet nursed because it was the customary or ritual method of feeding for future rulers, whilst wet nurses were employed to suckle infants from other social classes for other assorted reasons. In the Old Testament, the story of the discovery of the infant Moses and the subsequent search for a wet nurse among both Egyptians and Hebrews shows how wet nursing was regarded as essential for the survival of abandoned babies. The presence of slavery in ancient societies, as for example in the Roman Empire, was also relevant to the wet nursing of foundlings since lactating slave women ensured a constant and readily available supply of wet nurses who could be employed, or hired out, by their owners.[29] But, in many medieval societies, wet nurses gradually became a status symbol for wealthier families. For example, Christiane Klapisch has described the custom in fifteenth-century Florence of sending children immediately after birth out for wet nursing, a rich custom among

the merchants and notaries whose family account, *Libri di Ricordanze*, she has studied.[30] Dorothy McClaren points out that in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, well-to-do women sent their babies out to be nursed by poorer women who also breastfed their own.[31]

Under Mughals this pervasive practice of the upper classes seems to take on a different tone; to forge bonding between wet nurse's family and the child. Mughals were deliberate and strategic in selection of wet nurses. Predilection was invariably given to trustworthy ladies but 'milky and strong' having strong family connections so as to forge ties between her family and the royals. When Humayun chose Jiji Angah – who was married into the prominent Ghazni-based Central Asian Atgah clan – to nurse Akbar, he did so in the context of contention with his younger brother Mirza Kamran over parts of eastern Afghanistan, including Ghazni. Just less than thirty years later, Akbar appointed a number of women from the family of Shaikh Salim – a member of the renowned pan-Indian Chishti Sufi order – to nurse his first son, Salim. Over the next few years, other women from the same family served as foster mothers for his two other sons, Murad and Danyal. In doing so, Akbar added a material and bodily attachment to the spiritual ties he had already tried to forge with the Chishtis, an order that upheld his political ambitions to become a specifically Hindustani Muslim emperor. Once trusted by imperial family, a wet nurse's task thereafter was not exlusively nursing. After suckling duties were no longer required, they acted as nurse-cum-governess and their husbands as guardians, until further appointment of literary tutor (*ataliq*).[32] As the child grew older, the role of the guardian seems to have developed into that of a mentor whereas the nurse's role probably remained that of a loving surrogate mother. This is not to say that one relationship was valued more or less than the other, they merely may have evolved in different ways as the nursling grew older. The ties formed by the 'bountiful' milk were crucial and appear more

stringent than those of blood kinship. Once selected the whole family of the nurse placed themselves at the disposal of the foster child, with whom, for the rest of their lives, their fortunes were unalterably bound up. Whatever were a child's misfortunes or crimes in life, his good and bad fortunes were equally shared by foster families. Had exile be his lot, his foster kindred accompanied him. On the other hand, if he climbed to influence, his foster-father was generally his most confidant adviser and his foster-brothers were employed on the most important missions. The example of Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Khan, the husband of Jiji Angah, and their son Mirza Aziz is the most appropriate to be cited here; reared Akbar while Humayun was in exile and gained influential positions after he regained power from Afghans in 1555 AD. Both received the titles of *Atgah Khan* (foster-father, Shams-ud-Din) and Khan-i-Azam, *Kokah* (foster-brother, Mirza Aziz) from Humayun and Akbar, respectively.[33] Their positions during Akbar's early years are well known from the histories of the time.[34] We have ample substantiations from successive reigns indicative of foster families being promoted or patronized to the leading positions. Emperor Jahangir was much attached to the son of her wet nurse Qutub-ud-Din Kokah, who was 'the foster-brother... most fit for fosterage', and promoted him grandly at the beginning of his reign, and had patronized as well a son of another nurse, Shaikh Bayzid.[35] Shah Jahan was very warmhearted to his wet nurse Zeb-Un-Nisa-aka Dai Angah, *atgah*, Murad Khan and *kokah*, Muhammad Rashid Khan. Aurangzeb's foster father and his sons Mir Malik Husain (Khan Jahan, Bahadur Khan Kokah) and Mir Muzaffar Husain (Fidai Khan Kokah) places were as well raised splendidly by Aurangzeb.[36]

Wet Nurse and Politics

Ideally, akin to Greek doctors' prototype, the breastfeeding in each regal birth was often restricted to 'nobly born' women.

Corresponding to this inspiration as detailed in previous sections, Buddist Tangut were the most ideal wet nurses for Mangol royal family.[37] One of the most celebrated wet nurses for Ghazan khan was a Moghalchin, wife of noble Isheng, the Khitan.[38] Similarly, Olja Aim, the wet nurse of emperor Timur or Tamerlane, was from a high noble family. The contemporary histories of Mughal reign confirm that the wet nurses chosen for regal infants were nobly born with 'pure disposition and integrity' selected from the harem of senior officials of the royal place. Bibi Fatima, Humayun's nurse, was amongst noble wives. Among Akbar's nurses, Jiji Angah was wife of 'the nobly born' Shams-ud-Din Muhammad of Ghazni, Daya Bhawal herself was a 'special servant'; Fakhr-un-Nisa Angah was Humayun's attendant from his childhood; Khwaja Ghazi was a companion of Humayun, whose wife also suckled Akbar; and Pija Jan Angah was married to Khawaja Maqsud of Herat, a man of 'pure disposition and integrity'.[39] Similarly, Jahangir's nurses particularly Bayzid's and Qutub- ud-Din's mothers were from the progeny of venerable Shaikh Salim Chishti[40] – who held an especial important place in Chishti hagiography for the Mughals. Shah Jahan's wet nurse persistently mentioned in chroniclers Zeb u-Nisa aka (Dai Angah) was a woman of 'chaste nature'. Aurangzeb's nurse, mother of Khan Jahan Bahadur Zafar Jang, also had equal lineage.

Wet nurses enjoyed a high status – that a non-royal woman could ever hope for – therefore the post was eagerly contested prior to each regal birth. Consequent upon Jiji Angah's selection as principle wet nurse, Abul Fazl writes, 'clothed with the glorious head-dress and mantle of distinction, by obtaining the auspicious service of nursing this new fruit of the spring tide of sovereignty and fortune, and should have the blissful and glory'.[41] This was a recompense for the 'noble-deed' performed several years ago. However, while Akbar born 'the period of the pregnancy of this purely framed nurse was not yet fulfilled',[42] therefore, Hamida Banu Begam ordered that Daya Bhawal

chosen amongst others for standby should feed the infant Akbar. The status of imperial wet nurses was such that they appear in guest-lists of all main feasts of royalty. Children brought up in the company of the royal infants bore the title of '*kokah*' [foster]-brother (or sister) of the royal children. Whereas a designation of '*atgah*' [foster]-father seems to have been given only to the husbands of wet nurses of reigning princes.

In the expansive community of Mughals emperor's harem, matters of kith and kin, and notions of blood and genealogy, though remain vital, but were not the only essential elements. The emperor's 'foster'-community pushed the boundaries of what would normally be recognized as blood relations and relationships of marriage and birth (*nasab* and *mushara*). For e.g., Akbar's words, ascribed to him by his chronicler – 'between me and Aziz [Aziz Kokah] is a river of milk that I cannot cross' – point to is a relationship between two people that is made through milk, but is actually on a par with blood relationships. Akbar's statement seems to be invoking a *hadith* attributed to Prophet Muhammad: 'What is forbidden as a result of blood relationships is forbidden as a result of milk relationships as well'. It is credited also to Aisha, the Prophet's wife: 'milk relationships (*rida'a*) prohibit precisely what blood relationships (*nasab*) do'.[43] It is important to mention that the milk kinship sentiment which Mughals acknowledged may not be entirely attributed to the dominance of the Muslim faith which they had embraced, but marks the prevalence of such kinships among them from immemorial times equivalent to blood relationship. The titles *angah*, *atgah* and *kokah* used to designate the milk-mother, milk-father and milk-brother and sister, are Turkish words that were in common use among nomadic tribes from whom, as stated before, the Mughal emperors drew their beginning.[44] For instance, the Osman Turks had allowed to a [milk]-brother free admittance to the harem which was otherwise permitted to only near kinsmen. The author of *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* observes milk relatives of chieftains

using their proximity to increase political and social prominence.[45] However, in a modest sense, the gulf is noticeable between Islamic ethics of *rida'a* as established by the *Qur'an* and other branches of *hadith* and the Mughal milk kinship beliefs and practices. That may help us to have a handle on the larger issue, the Islam they had practised and how heavily it was accentuated by rudiments which were accretions from the confined environments that had contradicted the professed fundamentalist views.

Throughout Mughal history, competition for political power 'inside' has normally been a struggle among groups, usually kinship groups each with a strong house organization. Unlike those linked to the throne solely through marriage or alliances of convenience, a nurse and her kin were emotionally and politically bound to their charges, making them most likely to be trusted for sensitive tasks. Maham Angah, the superintendent of nurses, who attended on Akbar 'from cradle till after his accession', was for many years the centre of 'all affairs in the realm'.[46] When Adham Khan actually stabbed the emperor's minister, Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Khan, it is remarked by the Muslim historian that Akbar's wrath caused him to forget the *nisbat* [*nasab,* 'kinship'] which bound him to the assassin's mother, and order his summary execution. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar overlooked a lot of his follies: in the stealing of the beauty of the Baz Bahdur and other such instances, Akbar 'overlooked this gross outrage...'.[47] The emperor's relationship with Maham Angah may have been an important factor in these considerations. Nevertheless, after the murder of Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Khan, punishment could not be avoided any longer. After all, Shams-ud-Din was Akbar's *Atgah,* foster-father and quite clearly, Adham Khan's behaviour had crossed all permissible limits. His breaking open of the door to the harem and attack on the emperor himself were acts of ultimate culpability. Akbar's reactions seem in keeping with his own close relationship with Shams-ud-Din Atgah Khan and also in

accordance with his duties as a monarch. A royal *angah* could also open a pathway of upward social mobility for her children and extended family. The appointment of Jiji Angah's extended family to various high offices both in the capital and provinces is just one example in the Mughal history. The Evidence of Akbar's kokah, Mirza Aziz (the scion of *atgah* clan) favoured status is manifold. An example is his imperial rank. By end of Akbar's reign he had been elevated to the extraordinary standing of 7000/6000, comparable to royal princes at that time. The first figure represented his rank in the imperial hierarchy (*zat*); the second indicated the number of horsemen (*sawar*) he was expected to maintain from his income.[48] It was not the only family that was able to rise to the highest echelons of the nobility through their wet nurse ties. Saif Khan and Zain Khan, two sons of Pija-jan, another nurse of Akbar, too were highly favoured by Akbar amongst other *kokahs*. In the course of Jahangir's sovereignty, Aziz Kokah would surely have received capital punishment for his involvements – in pro-Khusrau's activities and complicity as well with the Jahangir's adversary, such as Raja Ali Khan of Khandesh – 'had his mother not given her milk to my father [Akbar]', Jahangir yelled.[49] Similarly, we do observe Raushan Beg beseeching Humayun in the name of his mother 'whose milk he [Humayun] has suckled'.[50] The strength of these ties was such that *kokah*s at times were the only people who could speak – as Bahadur Khan Kokah repeatedly did to Emperor Aurangzeb – with 'audacity and recklessness'.[51] The influence a wet nurse exerted on her nursling was often given as the reason imperial *kokahs* went astray. It was the honorary rewards that shattered conventional status boundaries and provoked criticism from their contemporaries.The broad state of affairs can aptly be judged from an 'amusing affair' evinced by Manucci involving Aurangzeb's foster brother, Bahadur Khan Kokah who was 'lifted from an obscure position to that of a general':[52]

His sudden rise caused him to 'become very high and mighty and vain-glorious'. Furthermore, the Kokah never ceased to draw attention to his close connection to Aurangzeb. Instead of referring him by his title, he shall speak of him as his '*kokah*'; thus he used to say, 'how would be my kokah'? Irritated by his pretensions to high status, Mahabat Khan 'decided to teach him a lesson'. He did so by arranging with his own *kokah* that when Bahadur Khan would visit Mahabat Khan in his tent, 'he should, richly clad and with an aigrette of gold stuck into his turban, gallop past on a fine horse, acting the braggart, as if on his way to his own quarters'. The *kokah* did as told. As anticipated, Bahadur Khan wondered at this performance, and asked who that 'mighty warrior' was. Mahabat Khan did not use the man's name, but, assuming an innocent air, he said briefly: 'these foster-brothers are shameless creatures, and have no tact in what they do. They fancy that, being our brothers by milk, they are equal members of our house'! Although Bahadur Khan Kokah is said to have understood Mahabat Khan's message, according to Manucci, he chose to ignore it.

Visual Images

Visual and textual evidences of Mughal reign seldom portrayed imperial women fulfilling their maternal role – albeit – a group of representation signals the role filled by a small number of women.[53] These women seem to have been wet nurses to princes and princess of the dynasty with the title 'royal nurse' *angah* or *maham-angah*. These women were usually represented prominently in the Mughal sources interacting with magnificent children. Sometimes, an individual wet nurse is being depicted holding and even suckling her royal nursling, who usually appears as a child but occasionally is shown as a miniature king. Mughal imperial family would rely on the services of wet nurses with an open mind without judging the practice on the basis of the assumption that maternal breastfeeding was necessarily better than wet nursing. Although there had been negative attitudes toward the colostrums – it's

nutritional and immunogenic qualities were not understood – they seem to have been fully aware of the immunogenic qualities of the breastmilk.

Mughal artists have painted many moving scenes of baby nursing which appear to have been influenced not only by the European example such as Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus, but also by Hindu pictures of the infant Krishna at foster mother's breast.[54] The Mughal emperors thought the vistas of battle and births as most appropriate for immortalization not only because they are momentous and lively occurrences, but also what most made an empire. It becomes clear from the two depictions (Plates 1&2) that the wet nurses holding and suckling babies under the supervision of noble sitting mothers signify that the care for a newborn, a hard and physically demanding task was not considered appropriate for a woman of high social standing. The royal mothers are pictured keeping close eyes on the nurses that care for their children while the sitting position indicates their superior social status. It must be borne in mind that artists were never allowed to enter the inner regions of the *zenana.* Their portrayals of girls and women are based on contemporary ideals — although it was generally known what the aristocratic Mughals looked like. Some portraits seem true to life.

A folio from the Bibliotheque Nationale *Rashid al-Din*'s *Jami al-Tawarikh* (compendium of chronicles), 'Ghazan Khan as a baby with his Mother and Nurse'(Plate 1), illustrated at imperial Mughal studio, [55] depicts Ghazan Khan suckling his wet nurse while mother is seated in retiring splendour. [56] The Mongol and Timurid paintings are similar in their depiction of a prince flanked by wet nurses. The royal mother can be seen lying with canopy on a magnificent bed. Close to her feet a (life-size) wet nurse is suckling royal nursling in a 'natural' nurturing instinct. In the courtyard, a group of great astrologers who were present read the planet and the situation of his blessed birth, and using all caution they cast his horoscope and seem to have found the ascendant of his birth extremely favourable.

> 'And each one them said, ['I have looked into your ascendant, your lot will be that of one thousand lives']. And they were all in agreement that he would be a great king. [And they shouted,] his ascendant and his lot are lofty. May his throne reach the shinning sun'. They gave him to a well mannered wet nurse...[57]

Beggar is waiting at the entrance for share of the alms to be given out as thanks offerings. Akbar was a descendant of Ghazan Khan, a Mongol sultan (r. 1295-1304) through his grandfather Babur's mother. By selecting the manuscript such as this, Akbar conceivably sought to illustrate his noble heritage, which shall further legitimize his rule.

A miniature from the British Library *Akbar Nama*, 'The infant Akbar placed in the care of his nurses by his mother Maryam Makani'(Plate 2), signals the special role filled by a small number of women with regard to the royal children — these women are no other than the wet nurses. Persian texts of this painting corroborate their names, which offer a visual parallel to textual descriptions. Abul Fazl in *Akbar Nama* mentions names of ten wet nurses for infant Akbar and further denotes that 'many other fortunate cupola of chastity were also exalted by the excellence of this service'.[58] Royal mother is seated in an individual magnificent bed offering gifts to a wet nurse. Other women around wearing Chagatai Turkish headdress are probably wet nurses-in-waiting since Persian text of the painting corroborates the names of ten wet nurses. Unlike to wet nurses, a dignified woman seated (in this image) next to mother in overseeing position is most likely Maham Angah, superintendent of the nurses – often referred incorrectly as a wet nurse. Interestingly neither Abul Fazl includes her name in the list of wet nurses (Vol.I, Chapter 9 of *Akbar Nama*) nor is it cited in the inscriptions of this painting. Though the stories of her close relationship comparable to those between prince and *angahs* are plentiful there is no evidence which provides explicit confirmation of her role as a wet nurse.[59] In the lower court, retainers are busily rejoicing the birth festivities and a few

persons are seen telling the exact time of the birth to astrologers so that they can prepare the infant's horoscope according to both Indian and Islamic astrology. Beggars are waiting at the entrance to the castle for their share of the alms to be given out as thanks offerings. Both Abdul Qadir Badauni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* and Nizam-ud din Ahmad's *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* confirm that largesse was bestowed on the poor, while Abul Fazl mentions that prisoners were released in thanksgiving.[60] The very capturing of the moment of feeding in this visual representation attests to its great symbolic significance: the presence of several nurses simultaneously, the flurry of activity that surrounds the feeding, and the centrality of the noble child, carry their own importance.

Immediately after royal birth it was custom to take away infants from their mothers to be washed and wrapped in swaddling bands. Then after touching some honey[61] to the lips of new born it was put to the breast of a wet nurse – contrary to Abul Fazl's postulation [apparent from the italicised part in the inscription reproduced below] that baby 'might have suckled by own mother before wet nurse'.[62] In medieval era since the nutritional and immunogenic qualities of colostrum were not implicit – contrary it was considered 'bad' milk, of dubious colour and evil properties.[63] Thus Abul Fazl's presumption looks apparently incorrect. Although the number of wet nurses for each ward and their prerogatives were not standardized, yet the custom of using multiple wet nurses – evident from the Persian inscription of this painting – were common at least for reigning princes, parallel to the Hellenistic kings. The inscriptions of this painting in fact refer to the nursling progression of newborn Akbar.

The inscriptions read:

> *[Daya Bhawal]* ... a special servant of Hazrat Jahanbani Jannat Ashiani, legendary for good value and limpidness, was directed [by Hamida Banu Begum] to suckle. [Author of the epigraph, Abul Fazl says] *that first of all baby supposedly accepted milk of his own mother Qudasia*

> *Maryam Makani.* Then, Fakr i-nisa, wife [mother] of Nadim kokah, was honoured. Then after Bhawal Angah got contented. Then after the wife of Khawaja Gazi got this privilege. Then Hakima, after these virtuous temperaments Jiji Angah in harmony obtained utmost felicity. After her, Kuki Angah, wife of Tugh Begi and after her Bibi Rupa had opportunity for this fortunate service. After then Khaldar Angah, mother of Saddat Yar Kokah, was selected for this advantage. At last that faithful Pija Jahan Angah, mother of Zain Khan Kokah, obtained a store of eternal prominence by obtaining her wish for this immense good thing. (Transliteration and emphasis mine).

The intrinsic power of the wet nurse role exacerbated tensions among families competing for appointments to this post and for a means of institutionalizing their influence. When Akbar was eight months old, Abul Fazl records that there was a lot of contention among the nurses who fed Akbar in his infancy. Jiji Angah, in particular, was opposed by others, especially by Maham Angah. At one point, the chronicler says, Jiji Angah was disturbed to learn that the nurses had reported to Humayun that 'Mir Ghaznavi's wife (i.e., herself) was practising incantations so that his Majesty, the prince of mankind (Akbar), should not accept anyone's milk but her own'.[64]

Informations about the lives, personalities, and importance of wet nurses in the Mughal dynasty although come mainly from laconic references in chronicles of the period, but if such comments are linked together and placed within a broader context, patterns emerge. The role of the wet nurse allowed for upward mobility as well. After nurse families gained the right to raise imperial princes, they amassed social and political prestige. However, their influence remained transitory and unstable because of its intrinsically personal nature. Hence, wet nurse's families attempted to solidify their status and court privileges by intermarrying with exalted members of the court and becoming *ataliqs* for the children of reigning emperors. Few families could sustain court influence over several generations unless they translated their encompassing milk ties into more enduring, if less binding, marriage ties. Bibi Fatima,

nurse to Humayun, supplemented her family's influence by distinguished marriage of her daughter to Akbar's mother's brother. It appear from Akbari literature that for sustaining his milk relations with imperial court, Mirza Aziz (Kokah) married a daughter each to Prince Murad and Khusraw, respectively the son and grandson of Akbar.[65] Some husbands and biological sons of wet nurses when used their ties to advance themselves more furtherer also elicited resentment from their social superiors. Throughout Mughals reigns, hereditary retainers' relatives by marriage, and the families of wet nurses constituted the core of a warrior's followers. Milk kin proved more reliable than confederates whose bonds of allegiance were established through land grants.

There are references in Mughal sources which show that the institution of wet nursing provided space for Mughal women to exercise political power. Towards the end of Akbar's reign and early in Jahangir's, a milk sister of Akbar, Hajji Aziz Kokah (daughter of Khaldar Angah), filled the position of *sadr-i anas*, chief of the administration and organization of a Mughal harem or a *zenana*.[66] The position was usually held by a much respected woman of the realm.[67] Jahangir had given her the prerogative of recommending the names of women who deserved the benefit of *madad-i-maash*, grant of land revenue.[68] Attributable to intimate ties with emperor, her brother Sa'adat Yar Kokah was an important *mansabdar* who also accompanied the first official *hajj* of the reign.[69] Later, during Jahangir's reign, Dai Dilaram, a former nurse of Nur Jahan, was appointed *sadr-i anas*.[70] Bibi Fatima, chief *urdubegi* (armed woman retainer) in the *zenana* of Humayun, also held the position of *sadr-i anas* after Maham's death in 1562. She was a nurse to Humayun. Gulbadan in *Humayun Nama* refers to her as 'Fatima Sultan Angah, mother of Raushan Kokah' and Jawhar Aftabchi records the fact that his mother had been Humayun's wet nurse.[71] The title Sultan is an honorific, perhaps indicating her status in the imperial harem during Akbar's reign (when the memoirs were

written). In the year that followed, Raushan Beg kokah, who shared his mother's milk with baby prince, with whom, thereafter, lifelong bonding was supposed to take place, became a close companion of Humayun and shared his early adventures. Raushan Beg was one of a small band of followers, who fled with Humayun through Panjab and Sindh, holding the office of *tushak begi*, or wardrobe-keeper. Bibi Fatima's status as a nurse to Emperor Humayun would explain her subsequent importance: her presence at Mirza Hindal's wedding; her title of *urdubegi-i-mahal* (*urdubegi* of the palace), during an episode in which she guarded Humayun's person during a near fatal illness in the midst of a grave political crisis;[72] her presence on a diplomatic mission dispatched to Badakhshan by Humayun; and her daughter's distinguished marriage to Akbar's mother's brother, Khwaja Muazzam. Humayun's another kokah, whose name too appears persistently in contemporary sources, was Haji Muhammad Khan (son of Baba Qushka, intimate associate of Babur). Nurses commonly appear in the list of all important royal festivals.[73] In Mughals India, on the other hand, the institution of *parda* [seclusion of women] was not so deeply entrenched. The Mughals ruled a largely Hindu population, and the emperors took Hindu wives and concubines. In addition, the culture of the Mughal court was a syncretic blend of Hindu and Muslim styles and traditions. Although husbands and fathers ordinarily secluded their wives and daughters in Mughal India, they did not link their own sense of honour so strongly to the institution of *parda*. Thus, privileged women in Mughal India played a more public role than in Safavid and Ottoman empires. In that sense, Mughal dynastic histories were reasonably free from misogynist prejudice. Their author readily acknowledged that women were capable of governing.[74] Within the Mughal court, historians noted that women actively participated in factional conflict – as Maham Angah and Hamida Banu Begam (respectively the nurse and mother of Akbar) did when they actively opposed

the dominance of Akbar's *ataliq*, Bayram Khan. Women were sent on diplomatic missions and sought favours for their husbands or near relatives at court. Imperial women in Mughal Empire were quite dynamic in public arena.

NOTES

1. B. Rawson, ed. *The Family in Ancient Rome*, London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986.
2. Aliah Schleifer, *Motherhood in Islam*, 1986, p.53.
3. Shams al-Din al-Sarakhsi, *Kitab al-Mabsut,* Vol. XV, pp. 118,129.
4. Yaha b. Sharaf al-Nawawi, *Al-Majmu – Sharh al-Muhadhdhab,* Beirut: 1991, Vol.XVIII, p. 221.
5. For Europe, there is evidence of the same in didactic literature, see Shulmat Shahr, *Childhood in Middle Age*, pp. 53-54.
6. The most likely infants to be fed in this way were either the offspring of the relatively wealthy members of the society or parish children, a group which included bastards, foundlings, poor motherless infants and orphans. See Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies*, pp. 152-2120.
7. For e.g., Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, 1988; Janet Golden, *A Social History of Wet Nursing in America*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Conversely, according to certain legal school, free married women (free women of higher social groups in the Malikite view) are also allowed to choose whether to breastfeed by themselves – so that they could maintain their figure and avoid the complications that always could arise from breastfeeding – or, to entrust another woman with this task, unless the nursling rejected a stranger's milk.
8. F. Weinder, *Geburts-und Wochenbettdarstellung auf Altagyptischen Tempelreliefs*, Munich: 1915, quoted in Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, pp.2-3.
9. Probably, corresponding to this motivation, Mughal emperor Akbar chose Ladhi – a mother of Dullah Bhatti, legendary Rajput hero of Punjab – to breastfed weakling Salim (future Jahangir) during his initiation stage. The strong emotional bond which was known to develop by the 'bountiful' milk between Dullah and Salim is referred to in a popular ballad of the region.
10. Mongol/Mughal customs forbade wet nurses of princes to have sexual intercourse with their husbands fearing 'contamination' of their milk. For example, Rashid al-Din (in *Jami al-Tawarikh*) recounts that Ghazan Khan had wet-nurse, Moghalchin, wife of noble Isheng (the Khitan), who slept with her husband, and the young Ghazan contracted diarrhoea from her milk, thus Moghalchin was reprimanded and replaced.
11. Suffice to say that Emperor Shahjahan's wife Mumtaz Mahal, for instance, bore fourteen children, seven of whom died in infancy. Although Mughal

sources never mention birth control practices or other attempts to limit the number of children born, Manucci (the Italian traveler and sometime 'doctor' to Prince Mu'azzam's harem) suggests that princes were not allowed to have more than four sons. To keep within that number, women were forced to abort unwanted fetuses. See *Storia Do Mongor or Mogul India*, Vol.II, p.384. See also Munis Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire*, p.89.

12. Dorothy McLaren, 'Marital fertility and Lactation, 1570-720', in Mary Prior, ed. *Women in English Society*, p. 45.
13. The contraceptive advantage of lactation was well known to women in all societies in all periods. See K. Bradley, 'Sexual Regulations in Wet-nursing Contracts from Roman Egypt', *Klio*, 62 (1980), pp. 321-25; Dorothy Mclaren, 'Nature's Contraceptive: Wet-nursing and Prolonged Lactation: the Case of Chesham, Buckinghamshire, 1578-1601', *Medical History*, pp. 426-441.
14. Anne K. Capel, ed. *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt,* Ohio: Hudson Hills Press with Cincinnati Art Museum, 1996, pp.17-20.
15. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, pp. 129-31/43-44.
16. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p.131/44 (n.5). See also Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, Delhi: Manohar, 2006, p. 1242.
17. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p.131/44 (n.6). See also Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 1457.
18. In the pursuit of the blessing of the sons, Akbar had made a foot pilgrimage to Ajmer to visit the tomb of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti and had happened to visit Shaikh Salim in his 'abode on a hill near Sikri'. Shaikh Salim had correctly prophesied that Akbar would have three sons and in gratitude Akbar had named the first of these sons (in 1569) after the illustrious Sufi. See Gulbadan, *Humayun Nama*, p.75; Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, p.2.
19. Nizam-ud din Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol.II, p.112.
20. *Anāga* in Mughal literature primarily mean wet nurse though in Turkish it does not always have this meaning. See M. Pavet de Courteille*, Dictionaire Turk-Oriental*, Paris: L'Imprimerie Imperiale, 1870, p.37; Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 134 (translator note on Maham Anaga).

    Dāya (Mid. Pers, *dāyag or dāye)* is a Persian word for wet nurse, although sometime in Mughal history it refers spiritual suckling of new-born. See Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.I, chapter ix, p.129/43 '*qawābil-i-rūḥānī-qawālib*' (also n.1). Also see *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* Vol. VII, pp. 164-66 (online version) and Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 502 ; for *Zir*, see W. Edward Lane*, Arabic-English Lexion*, London: 1893, Book I, p.1907.
21. The precise definition of wet nurse's children remained ambiguous. All close relatives of the Wet Nurse who were of sufficiently youthful age could have plausibly called *kokahs* or *kokaltash* (milk brothers and sisters).

22. For this clan, see Afzal Husain, *The Nobility Under Akbar and Jahangir*, Delhi: Manohar, 1999, pp. 45-69.
23. One of the first Muslim doctors to adopt this idea was Muhammad b. Zakariya Al-Razi (865-923AD): 'The moral character of a nursling resembles that of its nurse and it becomes like her'. This kind of idea can be encountered widely in the *Qur'anic* literature. For prevalent of this notion in Europe, see Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.70.

    The nurse-child bond was often stronger than the mother-child bond and could even replace it, witness the way in which the Prophet Muhammad's (who lost his mother at early age) biographies describe the relationship between Muhammad and his wet nurse Halimah. See Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses*, pp.36-38. For general discussion on the issue, see Matthews Grieco, 'Breast Feeding, Wet Nursing and Infant Mortality', in *Historical Perspectives on Breast Feeding*, pp.15-62 and Shahr, *Childhood in Middle Age*.
24. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. I, p. 129/43.
25. Gulbadan Begam, *Humayun Nama*, p. 201.
26. Though the stories of her deep emotional attachment are plentiful in Akabri chronicles, [but] there is no explicit evidence which provides clear ratification of her role as an actual wet nurse. She attended on Akbar 'from his cradle ... .' and 'merrily offered her life for sake of baby Akbar' and was for many years centre of 'all affairs in the realm', all this does not follow that she did so in the capacity of wet nurse. The stronger possibility as suggested by Henry Beveridge is that Maham Angah was head or the superintendent of the nurses rather than chief *angah.* According to Beveridge she certainly was not the chief *angah* in the sense of providing maximum nourishment to the infant prince, for that we are told by Abul Fazl that Jiji Angah was chief in this respect (Vol.I, p. 384/187): other nurses of Akbar accused Jiji Angah of 'practicing incantations' so as to prevent the infant Akbar from accepting anyone else's milk but her own. It seems quite evident from *Tārīkh-i-humāyūn* while referring Jiji as Prince's nurse (*angah*) denotes that Maham Bega (author calls her by this appellation) was head of the Prince's nurses, i.e., *ke āgha anaga Nawāb-i-īshān būd*. See Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.1, pp.186-87 (tr. note,134 & index: vi-vii), Vol.II,p, 86/55; Henry Beveridge, 'Maham Angah', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1899, pp. 99-101.
27. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, p. 32.
28. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, pp.75-78.
29. K.R. Bradly, 'Wet-nursing at Rome', pp. 201-29; S. R. Joshel, 'Nurturing the Master's Child: Slavery and the Roman Child-nurse', *Signs*, 12 (1986), pp. 3-22.
30. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, 'Genitorinbnaturali e genitori di latte nella F renze del quattrocento', *Quaderni Storici*, 44 (1980), pp. 543-63; idem, *Women*,

Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985, pp.132-64.

31. Dorothy McClaren, 'Marital Fertility and Lactation', pp. 23-53.
32. The appointment of tutor for imperial princes from the non-nurse family mainly for Akbar's sons checked the power of wet nurses at court as they were supplanted by established male courtiers of high and middling rank who used the title '*ataliq*' to gain access to the throne, wealth, and influence. Mughal emperors allowed '*ataliq*' to educate and provide for imperial princes in their homes, thereby also ensuring that the trustworthy tutor could move from the periphery of court society to the epicenter of politics.
33. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol.I, pp. 337-38 and 343-46. '[Akbar]' raised [their] family from the dust of the roads to ... wealth and dignity', *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, p. 80.
34. See Farid Bhakkari, *Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin,* Vol.I, pp.58-70/79-99.
35. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, pp. 32,75-78.
36. Shah Nawaz Khan and Abdul Hayy, *Ma'athir al-Umara*, 3 vols. English trans. H. Beveridge, 1941, Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1979, Vol. I, pp.773-88/ 798-813. See also Manucci, *Storia Do Mongor*, Vol.II, pp.122.
37. Kublai Khan (b. 1215) was the second son of Tolui and Sorghaghtani Beki. As advised by grandfather Ghazan Khan, Sorghaghtani chose Budhist Tangut woman as Kublai's nurse. Kublai later honoured this nurse highly.
38. See above, n.10.
39. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.1, p.130/44.
40. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, pp, 32 & 75-78.
41. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.1, p. 130/ 44.
42. Abu l Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.1, p. 130/ 44.
43. See above, Chapter 3.
44. See *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hasting, Vol. IV, pp. 104-09.
45. Mirza Muhammad Haider Dughlat, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, trans. E.D. Ross, Delhi: Sagar Book House, 1974, p.459.
46. The part of the reason suggested in both *Akbar Nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* for Bayram Khan's loss of political power was Maham Angah's growing influence at the Mughal court. The chronicles tell us that Bayram Khan served Akbar in various capacities such as *Vakil* and the *Khan-i-Khanan* as well as the more personal task of acting as a regent and guide of Akbar in his early years, *Khan Baba*. He was one of the most powerful political figures in the Mughal court until 1560-61. Consequently, Maham Angah manipulated the appointment of Bahadur Khan to the office of *Vakil* whilst real work of this office was done by her only. See Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, pp. 329-32; *Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin*, Vol.I, pp.5-14/11-20. See also Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. II, pp.149-51/ 99-101; Count of Von Noer, *The Emperor Akbar*, trans. A.S. Beveridge, 2 vols. Calcutta: 1890, Vol.I, pp. 90-94; V.A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mughal*,

Delhi: S. Chand & Co, 1970, p.36.

47. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. II, pp. 220-21/142-43. Abul Fazl picks up the various strands of Akbar's relationships with his foster kin and intricately knots them around the event of Adham Khan's death. For explicit description, see Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp.198-202.
48. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari,* Vol. I, pp. 343-44, 574; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari,* Vol.III, p.231.
49. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, p.80.
50. Jawhar Aftabchi, *Tazkirat al-Waqayat*, p.72.
51. Bhimsen Saxsena, *Tarikh-i-Dilkasha*, trans. Jadunath Sarkar, Bombay: Dept. of Archives, Maharashtra, 1972, p. 202. See also Manucci, *Storia Do Mongor*, Vol. II, pp. 113-14.
52. Manucci, *Storia Do Mongor* , Vol.II, p.122.
53. Royal nurses were usually represented prominently in the Mughal paintings. Some of the noteworthy miniature paintings that cast supportive description are: A folio from a sixteenth century *Yusuf wa Zulaykha*, 'Zulaykha's Nurse Comforting Her', British Library, Jami Nur al-Din Abd al Rahman's *Yusuf wa Zulaykha*, MS Or. 4535, fol.33 v; 'Celebration of Timur Birth 1336', British Library *Akbar Nama*, MS Or. 12988, fol.34 v; 'Daniyal as an Infant ... (1572)', British Library *Akbar Nama*, MS Add. 26203,fol.311a; 'News of Birth Brought to ...', British Library *Akbar Nama*, MS Or.12988, fol.22 (original in double page); 'Rejoicing on the birth of Prince Salim at Fatehpur', Victoria and Albert Museum *Akbar Nama*, MS I.S. 2/1896, Acc.No. 78/117; 'The Birth of Jahangir', from a manuscript of *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (attributed to Bishan Das), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

    See also A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of the Indian Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Vol. VI: Mughal Painting*, Boston, 1930, pls 3-6; S.C. Welch, *The Art of Mughal India*, New York: Asia Society, 1963, pl.26; H. Knīköva and J. Marek, *The Jengiz Khan Miniatures from the Court of Akbar the Great*, trans. O. Kuthanova, London: Spring Books, 1963, pp.11-16; David Talbot Rice and Basil Gray (eds.), *Illustrations to the 'World History' of Rashid Al-Din*, Edinburg: Edinburgh University Press, 1976, pp. 1-2; S.C. Welch, *Imperial Mughal Painting*, London and New York, 1978, pl 16; Milo Cleveland Beach, *The New Cambridge History of India: Mughal and Rajput Painting*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, Volume 1, no. 15 (p.94); *Watson Collection of Indian Miniatures at the Elvehjem Museum of Art*, Gautamavajra Vajracarya, 2002, p,72.
54. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, p.147.
55. Copied in Tabriz in the early fourteenth century Arabic language, *Jami al-Tawarikh* was embellished at one or more courts of Iran and Central Asia during the fifteenth and possibly sixteenth centuries before it finally ended up

in the hands of Akbar's artists during the 1590s. Mughal court artists chose to envision history through their own distinctive artistic framework, dispensing entirely with the model even when there was an overlap in subject matter. See Yael Rice, Mughal Interventions in the Rampur *Jami al-Tawarikh*, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, 2012, pp. 150-164.

Compare, earlier illustrated copy of *Jami al-Tawarikh* today housed in the Raza Library in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh. 'Birth of Ghazan Khan',p. 268 here dated to 15th or 16th century. Opaque water color and gold on paper, 133x 270 mm, published in Barbara Schmitzand and Ziyaud-Din A. Desai, *Mughal and Persian Paintings and Illustrated Manuscripts in the Raza Library,Rampur*, New Delhi: Rampur Raza Library and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 2006, pl. 259 ; and also 'Birth of Ghazan Khan', from a manuscript of the *Jami al-Tawarikh* ', India, Mughal, 1004/1596 .Watercolor on paper. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, Jerome Wheelock Fund, 1935.12.

56. This is one of the few dispersed leaves from *Jami al-Tawarikh*, the bulk of which is in Gulistan Library in Teheran. For a discussion of other leaves, see Edwin Binney, *Indian Mminiature Painting from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd: the Mughal and Deccani Schools*, Portland: Oregon, 1973. See also Sheila S. Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's Illustrated History of the World*, London: Nour Foundation, 1995.
57. This inscription is adapted from another dispersal leave of *Jami al-Tawarikh*. See Ellison Banks Findly, *From the Courts of India: Indian Miniatures in the Collection of the Worcester Art Museum*, Massachusetts : University of Massachusetts Press, 1983, p.22.
58. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.I, /p.44.
59. When Akbar inflicted retaliation upon Maham's son Adham Khan for slaying Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Khan [emperor's *atgah*] almost all Akbari chroniclers records the episode but no one reflected this as an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards breast-feeder – the wet nurse. See Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.II, pp. 271-74; Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol.II, pp. 43-51. For comprehensive description of the event, see Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World,* pp. 197-200. I'm not denying the fact of her *nisbat* (relationship) with Akbar which she may have developed in other capacity.
60. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.II, pp. 506-07/347.
61. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.I, p.129/43 (n.3). The actual word in the text is sweet supposedly a hint to the practice of putting a honey into the mouths of the newly born.
62. See also Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.I, p.130/ 44.
63. Medical authorities who even urged maternal nursing cautioned full repose recuperation generally until the post-partum flux had ceased and the mother had been ritually 'cleansed'.

64. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.I, pp.384-85/ 186-87.
65. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, pp. 344-45. Cementing the ties between the imperial and great nobles, the imperial daughters were routinely married to the great men of the realm.
66. Some of the functions of the *sadr-i anas* are to be found enumerated in Inyat Khan's *Shahjahan Nama*, ed. and trans. W.E. Begley and Z. A. Desai, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990, p.572.
67. In the reign of Humayun, after the death of Maham Begam (1532/3 AD), Babur's wife, the post of *sadr-i anas* was held by Khanazada Begam (*Padshah Begam*), eldest sister of Babur.
68. S.A.I. Tirmizi, *Mughal Documents 1526-1627*, Delhi: Manohar, 1989, pp. 28-30; idem, *Edicts from the Mughal Harem*, Delhi: Manohar, 1979, pp.50-3,100-01.
69. Nizam-ud din Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol.III, p.1006; Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, p.46.
70. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol.I, pp.343-44.
71. Gulbadan, *Humayun Nama*, p.122/27; Jawhar Aftabchi, *Tazkirat al-Waqayat*, trans. Charles Stewart, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi, 1972, pp.33,74.
72. Bayazid Bayat, a contemporary observer present in the camp, asserts that throughout the crisis, 'Bibi Fatima left nothing undone so far as attendance on his majesty was needed'. Bayazid Biyat, *Tazkira-i-Humayun wa Akbar*, ed. M. Hidayat Husain, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1941, trans. B.P. Saksena, Allahabad University Studies, 6, I (1930), pp. 71-148, see p.100/73.
73. Gulbadan, *Humayun Nama*, pp.122-23/26a-26b.
74. See Nizam-ud din Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol.II, p.153, see also, pp.101,227-28 & 236-37.

CHAPTER-5

TRANSACTIONS IN KINSHIP: CLIENTAL FOSTERAGE AND IMPERIAL ALLEGIANCE

The parent-child affiliation indeed has various connotations which it accomplishes: genitor/genetrix; sources of status identity (pater/mater), nurse; tutor in moral and technical skills; and sponsor in the assumption of adult status. The rights, obligations, and experiences accompanying each role component generate a characteristic bond between parents and the child. It is appropriate here to discern the difference – as espoused by Esther Goody – in nurturance requirements of infants, young children on the one hand and older children and adolescents on the other. Goody in effect outlined five different functions of parenthood, which in many societies are shared between biological and social parents: first, bearing and begetting; second, status entitlements and rearing reciprocities; then nurturance, training and sponsorship. Social parents are refererred to as 'adoptive parents' who take all parental functions besides the first one, which cannot be transferred in any case in Islamic society. The children normally had not changed their names though they stayed during childhood with social parents, which make an explainable distinction between foster and adopted children. Fosterage in the Mughal milieu can be defined as the institutionalized allocation of the nurturance and educational elements of the parental role.[1] Mughal tradition of wet nursing was apparently a type-instance of rearing and nurturant fosterage. And the appointment of *ataliqs*/or tutors for older children of the imperial family – where the primary

obligation was training in adult role – can fittingly be termed educational fosterage.

Unlike Goody's postulation,[2] educational fosterage does not inherently fuse with sponsorship as explicated in the case of the imperial Mughal family. Sponsorship consists in the provision of a youth with the position and resources necessary for assumption of adult status. The protégé, *ataliq* for Mughal emperors' princes, and the extended family were usually expected to acknowledge themselves subordinate to their sponsors, the emperors. They served their sponsors by granting them public respect or political allegiance. The sponsor-protégé relationship not only provides for the transition between minority and adulthood, but extends the filial relationship into the adult world. The protégé enters the wider social system by making use of a share of his sponsor's resources and positioned in it.

Fosterage

Fosterage refers to rearing or having children through social rather than biological relationships. Although this was a prominent topic of nineteenth-century anthropology, studied historically by H. Maine (1875) and in a comprehensive survey by S.R. Steinmetz (1893), the concerted ethnographies of fosterage and quasi-adoption emerged only in the second half of the twentieth century.[3] The practices of delegated parenthood usually had entailed within close familial kin, typically grandparents and parents' siblings, which render the institution as much an expression of expanded family entitlements as an artifice of reconstructed parenthood.[4] There was infrequent recollection in common societies of an alternative deployment of fosterage where children were delegated to non-kin (or non-proximate kin), effecting political alliances between hierarchically ranked kin groups. This is what Goody distinguished from kinship fosterage as alliance fosterage*:* 'a

patron-client bond expressed in terms of quasi-kinship ... where fostering is clearly being used to establish reciprocal claims on loyalty and support'.[5] Interestingly, since classics the two main categories of fosterage are discernible: fosterage for affection or fosterage for a fee. Correspondingly, medieval Islamic texts – for e.g., Al-Sarakhsi's *Kitab al-Mabsut* (the extended book 'of Law') – expressively make a distinction between 'mercenary' wet nursing for payment and 'noble' suckling, the latter indicating allegiance fosterage and politically significant adoptive kinship rather than commercial nursing.[6] The Islamic patronate in that sense binds one person to another (both known as *mawali,* upper and lower *mawala*) in relationship of dependence, which further detaches the client from his natal group and incorporates him in that of the patron as a passive member.[7]

Adopting Goody's graphic depiction of pro-parenthood,[8] we need to distinguish corollary alignments of allegiance according to the relative status of pro-parents to natal parents, and hence in terms of their respective clientage or patronage (Fig. 1). The Mughal delegation of princes to courtiers for breastfeeding, rearing in infancy and early childhood, and education which characterizes later childhood and adolescence, would thus exemplify cliental fosterage, while the practice of sending [to]/ or upbringing of the others' infant in imperial household – e.g., *kokaldashs* and *khanzadas*[9] – exemplify patronal fosterage. Thus, we can reasonably argue that 'alliance was a part of the folk model of fostering' entailing 'an asymmetrical relationship between 'child-givers' and child-takers'.The Mughal cliental and patronal alignments of allegiance fosterage are, therefore, equivalent in child delegation to hypogamy and hypergamy in marital alliance. For purposes of subsequent illustration, Figure 1 shows a common compatibility of cliental fosterage with primary infant nursing and of patronal fosterage with later childcare. Yet, there seems no evident inevitability for such an exact correspondence of status alignment and fostering roles

which may be privately relegated to servants or concubines. We shall suggest at this point in time jaggedly that the clientel fosterage of superiors, typically instituted in infancy and rooted in a substantive idiom of kinship through milk, seems characteristic of segmentary-tributary polities;[10] while patronal fosterage, typically of weaned or adolescent children, becomes prominent in patrimonial states, albeit often still drawing its imagery of kinship from notions of infant nurture. Goody's functional framework of 'pro-parenthood' does facilitate comparison. It deftly sidesteps earlier definitional controversies surrounding the cross-cultural specification of such terms as 'fosterage', 'adoption', and 'guardianship', which rarely coincides with indigenous categories of delegated parenthood. Instead, fosterage is heuristically located within a broad class of analytically comparable institutions of variously distributed kinds of parenthood, informing our attention to whole alignments of parental kinship, roles of which may be variously partitioned and combined. Hence, according to Goody, such familiar institutions as 'ritual goodparenthood, the wet nurse, the nanny, Roman adrogation, and fosterage can all be seen as institutional transactions concerning one or other responsibility usually associated with the parental role'.[11]

In the Mughal world, entrusting a child either for nursing or education was not in any case an instance of parental inadequacy. We do have copious instances to deduce that children were fostered in the imperial household keeping in view the stretched political exemplifications. Mughal histories reveal that there were higher proportions of foster children in the household of political leaders and chiefs than in the households of ordinary individuals. Concomitantely, the prime focus in wet nursing and educational fosterage was on the royal baby, rather than on the wet nurse's and *ataliq's* child. For instance, because of this focus on preserving the life and health of the baby to be breastfed by the nurse, regulations were drawn up by a number of cultures to prevent women hiring themselves

out as wet nurses if they had inadequate milk supplies, were unhealthy, or had become pregnant.[12] The relationship thus developed was intrinsically linked to allegiance fosterage being used to establish mutual claims on allegiance and sustenance. Milk kinship between a princely pretender and his noble foster-kin was an intimate mutual allegiance played for high stakes of reward or destitution in competitive struggles with other royalty and their own supportive milk kin. But, indeed, it was the effect wet nursing had in thwarting the common practice of paternal-cousin marriages which probably first aroused reservations. It is said that when this idea was adopted, Muhammad must have been aware of the social significance it could have as a mechanism for establishing pseudo-kinship ties. Assuming that the Prophet's biographies reflect a pattern of social behaviour prevalent in the first centuries of Islam, one may conclude that wet nursing functioned as a means of creating relations, for instance, between sedentary communities such as Mecca and the tribes of the desert. More practically, though, creating such milk kinship with neighbours, who often would be members

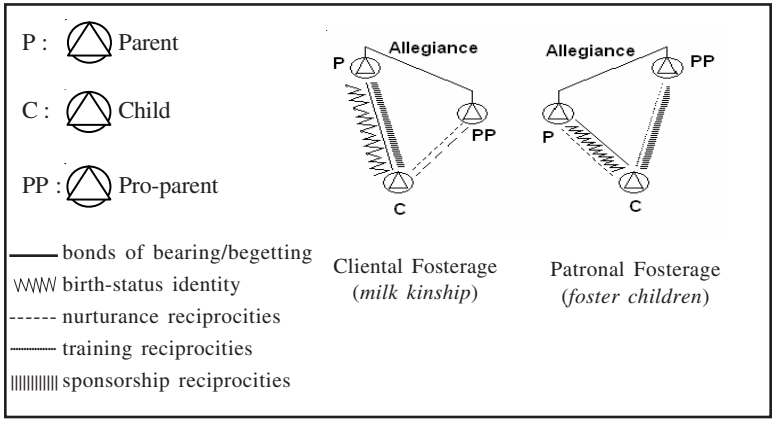


Figure I: Cliental and Patronal
Alignment of Allegiance Fosterage[13]

of the same extended family as I have pointed out in previous chapters, reduced the options of endogamous marriages and encouraged exogamous one. All this must have fallen into line with the Prophet's idea of creating a religious-political community (*umma*) based on common values and aims, rather than on blood ties.

Kinship and Fosterage

Infant fosterage in pre-modern Eurasia was usually recognized with consanguineal kinship formed by suckling breastmilk, as is still recognised in Islamic law. Its social and symbolic significance is predictable in historical records of the Mughal Empire. Indeed, fosterage or 'milk kinship (*nasab-i shi'r*)' in the Mughal empire looks like an accepted tradition of imperial allegiance, tying all offsprings of the dynasty to subordinate nobility, and thence interlinking successive status levels so as to form enchained factions of partisans. Milk kinship ties express and reinforce the bonds of trust between families of patrons and clients. In effect, milk kinship chains through fosterage comprised a structural analogue of asymmetric affine alliance — whereby the transitive circulation of children replaced that of spouses interlinking descent lines of different status levels — that did have an impact on the social-political relations of the Mughal imperial family. It precisely links two families of unequal status and creates a durable and intimate bond; it removes from 'clients' their outsider status but excludes them too as marriage partners. In such a relation, the wet nurse was not and did not expect to be paid money for her services, which indicated the more equal relationship she enjoyed with her milk child's family. Ibn Babawayh, in the tenth century AD, undoubtedly had this in mind when distinguished between wet nurses who offer their services in order to make a living and those who seek nursling in order to gain nobility and glory.[14] Seemingly, it put the nurses in a position of being the recipients,

rather than the givers — a position of strength in a society where patron-client relationships abound. The Mughals imperial histories abound in betrayal and assassinations committed by son against father, and brother against brother, so the affective allegiances of milk kinship emerged as a relational counterpart of often quite literal (parricidal or fratricidal) blood relations among ruling families.[15] Milk kinships between a princely claimant and his noble foster-kin were an intimate mutual allegiance. The dichotomy of blood-kin and milk kin was candidly put to: 'a real [blood] relative in a high family is a person who God points out to one to kill as an obstacle in one's way, whereas a foster relative (generally of a lower class) is a true friend who rises and falls with one's own fortune'.[16] The administration was correspondingly orchestrated through milk kinship connections, whereby *jagirs*/fiefs and extracts of tribute were represented in a pervasive idiom of fostering gift-exchange. Though in Mughal cases, cliental affiliation was crucially substantiated by a woman's breastfeeding yet 'milk-[*shi'ri*] fatherhood (*atgah* or *dayak*)'[17] through this nurse's legitimate husband – often responsible for co-raising and training fostered children until appointment of tutor (*ataliq*) – was recognized as the contractually and politically significant relationship in clientage. Like *angahs*, *ataliq*s were carefully chosen. Judging from the Mughal sources, princely tutors unlike *angahs* were not selected on the basis of connection to dominant groups or networks but rather on the presumption of their mastery of a particular discipline or skill. Manucci quotes Aurangzeb's description in the following excerpts:[18]

> The first object of a king or a prince of this world who has sons ought to be to seek out a nurse of good constitution without disease, who, giving the child to suck, should strengthen its feeble limbs. The child, sharing with her milk its nurse's health, will acquire, following the royal expectations, the vigour necessary for a good ruler of the people. But here the anxieties of a [emperor] are not at an end; on the contrary, if he has great trouble in choosing wet nurse, he must be still more careful in choosing an instructor to teach the young princes. As the

> health of the child depends upon the milk, good teaching depends upon the life of the mind, a thing more to be desired than bodily existence. This is the reason why all emperors, kings, and princes of intelligence [e.g. Greeks] have always done their best to obtain good teachers for their sons ... (trans. orginal)

The *ataliq*s' position was unenviable in stint that they had to carefully balance their own political interests alongside not only those of their princely charge but also those of the emperor, their ultimate patron. Compounding this subtle manipulating act, an *ataliq* was often closely censored, and sometimes obstructed, by more long-standing members of a princely household (for example, *angah*s or *kokah*s). Possibly fearing a recession of their own influence in the face of a forceful *ataliq*, members of a princely household were often determined to adopt a maximalist position when it came to protecting a prince's political interests.

According to Mughal custom, princes were placed under the charge of *ataliq* (tutor or foster-[*rezā'i*] father) to be educated as well raised further – could be sent out of royal household but not in any case to distant places – as soon as they were customarily, according to Muslim calendar, four years, four months and four days old. For instance, prince Salim (future Jahangir) was put for schooling under the charge of his first tutor Maulana Mir Kalan Haravi 'chosen with great care' on 18th November 1573 AD.[19] Mir Kalan Haravi as per custom raised his ward on his shoulders amidst a shower of commendations and expensive jewels.[20] After him, Shaikh Ahmad (son of Shaikh Salim) another religious scholar was favoured for Salim's *ataliq*. Emperor Akbar was deliberate and strategic in his selection of the prince's *ataliqs*, anointing ever more important individuals to this post. In 1579, Salim then ten years of age, Akbar appointed Qutub-Din Khan, a high-ranking noble and member of the powerful Central Asian Atgah clan. When Qutub -Din Khan was later needed in Gujarat in 1582, Akbar replaced him with another high ranking noble,

Abdur-Rahim Khan-i Khanan.Though as per tradition princes had initiated intimate contact with public affairs in their juvenile stages, they remained throughout under the tutelage of *ataliq* rationally till their marriages. The influence of the *ataliq* relatively akin to *atgah* was unfathomable; similarly, the foster child in later life often did his utmost to support his foster family. Mughal histories are abounding in references which corroborate the double nature of this institution.

Milk kinship in the Mughal realm thus was inherently linked to allegiance fosterage, all male offsprings of emperors were customarily sent at birth to cliental foster-parents – conversely, under the rationale of socio-political, we may presume a dissimilar situation in relation to the girl child.[21] On the occasion of a son being born, the child was assigned to a foster-mother – selected with colossal heed long before childbirth – in whose care it is brought up and the whole family of the nurse places themselves at the disposal of the foster child, with whom, for the rest of their lives, their providence is stubbornly bound up. References to nursing and breastfeeding indicate that fosterage could be undertaken instantaneously after the birth, so a child would be suckled by its foster-mother and then being trained by its foster-father. A normal duration of fosterage lasted from infancy until marriage — although separable duties of nursing and education could be subcontracted to successive fosterers. A fostered child thus readily acquired a duplicate set of adoptive kin, assimilated in address and manners with the natal kin of its foster-siblings, but distinguished in reference by a prefixed term of either milk/*shi'ri* (*nasbat-i-shi'ri*) or foster/*reza'i* (*nasbat-i-reza'i*). Milk-fatherhood (*atgah*) — the role to an emperor's son apparently as have said above sometimes doubled with that of tutor (*ataliq*)[22] — of course was the morally emphasized relation of political allegiance, but the nursing relationship of milk motherhood was considered constitutive of such adoptive kinship, conveying prohibitions of incestuous marriage through filiation by milk. The substantively imagined milk kinship as

also noted by John Biddulph[23] in the mountain kingdoms of the Central and South Asia in nineteenth century seems absorbedly recognized by Mughals. Hence, milk kinship could be extended by symbolic suckling at the breast, incorporating adults as well as infants with identical moral obligations. Italian traveler/adventurer Nicolao Manucci, who reports of Aurangzeb's brother, Dara Shikoh, that in order to get support from Raja Rajrup (of Mau and Pathankot), 'he allowed his wife (Nadira Begam) to receive the raja in her apartments, and treat him as her son by offering him water to drink with which she had just washed her breasts, not having milk in them. Rajrup drank sacred milk and swore to be true son'.[24] Such symbolic or 'fictive' foster kinship — creating sexual and marital impediments along with adoptive ties of allegiance — was customarily performed as a rite of reconciliation for defusing suspicions of adultery. It was also used as a manipulative means of forestalling undesired marital propositions, and for justifying marital separation. An argument of comparable kind could be made from the below mentioned ritual then in vogue: in case of the female babies of the Mughal families it was a custom to squeeze the nipples of a suckling child so that small 'milk drop' perceptible — which is believed to ensure the future well-being of the breast — and the brother of the infant was asked to suckle the milk drop, believed to create a deep tie of love between a brother and his sister. Pertaining to it, Jahangir in his *Tuzuk* tells us a fabulous story following the birth of his half-sibling-sister Shukr al-Nisa: 'the first time when .... they pressed my sister's breast and milk emerged, my venerated father said to me, 'Baba! drink this milk that in truth this sister may be to thee as a mother'.[25] As also appraised by Harbans Mukhia,[26] in this sense motherhood was captured in a trace of milk and transplanted on to sibling relationship; it also implicated pre-emption of the slightest trace of sexual attraction between them, the more so as they were half-brother and sister.

Cliental Allegiances

The kinship through suckling with equivalent notions of incest and marital impediment is universally recognized in Islamic law,[27] but its intrinsic relationship with institutional fosterage (Arabic *rabbā, rabīb*) appears scarcely documented. Modern accounts of Islamic milk kinship — in Saudi Arabia and Iran[28] — instance no equivalent cases of fosterage, only of incidental co-suckling by kinswomen, or temporary wet nursing, whose complex jural consequences for marital prohibitions have understandably attracted attention. Yet, far from being exceptional, the practice of cliental fosterage as also documented in the Mughal chronicles was, conceivably, once widespread in Islamic Asia, endorsing the former significance of milk kinship as a primary bond of political allegiances in its tributary polities. Cliental fosterage is well attested in the biography of the infant prophet Muhammad, who was sent shortly after his birth to be nursed and raised to childhood by Bedouin clients of the Banu Sa'd desert branch of his Quraysh tribe.[29] This was a customary practice of urban sedentary Arabs in the seventh century, reflecting a concern that infant nursing in the desert would better protect a child from urban plague, while its nomadic upbringing would instill primordial Arab virtues of rugged solidarity — Ibn Khaldun's 'group feeling' (*asabīya*) — restored by a renewal of tribal kinship through fosterage. Muhammad was thus considered 'most Arab' of Meccan Quraysh for having imbibed pure Bedouin milk from his foster-mother, Halimah. Fostering alliances between urban and desert Arabs are attested in other early Islamic biographies, and there is ample evidence that such cliental fosterage continued in Islamic kingdoms and sheikhdoms up to the twentieth century. [30]

Political loyalties through cliental fosterage were also employed in the emerging caliphates of Islam. The *wazir* or governor of an Abbasid caliph was ideally his foster-father or foster-brother, chosen from the family where he had been

consigned for infant nursing, which might include dependent slaves or cliental freedmen, Goitein notes:

> Sometimes, a slave child is suckled by the same woman who suckles the son of his lord, in order to constitute between the children a 'milk relationship' which, according to their custom and Islamic law, is a bond almost as strong as blood. [The Abbasid caliph] Al Mansur himself had been brought up in the same way. Yahya, a freedman of his family, was his foster-brother and therefore he entrusted him with a highly responsible task at the most critical period of his career, when, at the beginning of his reign, the caliphate was contested by his powerful uncle Abdullah. [31]

Goitein in continuance further notes how such cliental fosterage legitimated inter-dynastic allegiances and succession in early Muslim caliphates: 'it is a well-known fact that Harun al-Rashid was suckled by a woman of the Barmak family... while al-Fadl the Barmecide was fostered by the future caliph's mother... An earlier example of 'milk relationship' between Abbasids and Barmecides is also noted by Al-Tabari'.[32] We do find identical characteristics of political fosterage in many Muslim states up to Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal times. But as we have noticed in the Mughal case, Islamic milk kinship may be easily detached from its institutional moorings in fosterage, extended symbolically to confirm political alliances, or else deployed as a domestic strategy for intensifying kinship. This symbolic manipulation of the relationship also emerged early in Islam. Milk kinship then became singularly important after the Prophet Muhammad's annulment, according to divine revelation, of all other kinds of Arab adoptive kinship (*Qur'an*, 33/4-5), permitting his own marriage to the wife of an adopted son, Zayd.[33] The Prophet also then sanctioned an elaboration of milk kinship through token suckling: as an elective means of jurally reconstituting other kinds of adoptive kinship that had just been annulled. The adoptive mother of a young companion, Salim, was thus advised to offer this youth her breast for token suckling five times, recreating the necessary filiative link that would

restore their adoptive relationship.[34] This prototype of symbolic milk kinship inexorably set a precedent for its further social manipulation, which subsequent Islamic jurists would vainly strive to control.

Pre-Islamic milk kinship seems to have had minimal ramifications for incest and marital prohibitions, similar to those associated with other kinds of Semitic adoptive kinship, which typically entailed co-residence.[35] In a normal context of fosterage marriage within the adoptive family where one had been intimately raised as a child might be considered reprehensible for easily imagined Westermarckian reasons. This was perhaps all that was intended by the succinct Koranic injunction forbidding marriage with 'those who are your mothers by having suckled you, and those who are your sisters by suckling' (*Qur'an*, 4/23), which was later glossed (for women as for men) by a *hadith* tradition clarifying that 'what is forbidden by blood-kinship is equally forbidden by milk-kinship'.[36] Once milk kinship is separated from fosterage, however, this simple equation with consanguinity becomes problematic. In a context of plural marriage and easy divorce, coupled with professional wet nursing, juristic interpretations of filiation through milk — casuistically exploiting its stipulated parity with consanguinity — allows for its almost indefinite social ramification (especially for those willfully searching for strategic impediments to proposed marriages). As Giladi comments, 'if consistently applied, such a ramified system of prohibitions of marriage would have far-reaching social consequences', even 'extending the range of incest much beyond the way it is defined'.[37] Soraya Altorki (1980) concisely summarized Sunni Islamic legislation on such milk kinship impediments, as well as documenting strategic deployments of suckling within expanded families in Saudi Arabia. Khatib-Chahidi (1992) delineated a more extensive Shiite Iranian juristic interpretation, which also specifies the quantity and quality of suckling considered constitutive of valid milk kinship.

Reworking Altorki's synopsis, Françoise Héritier (1994) has further proposed an underlying 'humoral code' of male filiative substances transmitted through milk, which she considers inherently constitutive of its juristic logic, and more generally explanatory of Arab kinship and marriage.[38] However, Giladi's collation of its complex and variable legislation rather indicates a need to comprehend these regulations as the cumulative product of a highly contentious jural history,[39] particularly between the eighth and eleventh centuries, when Islamic jurists endeavoured to define and delimit the troublesomely expansive implications of milk kinship's purported equations with consanguinity. Behind this legislative history, one may decipher an incremental proliferation of milk kinship, in several respects comparable to the parallel inflation of god-parenthood in Christian Europe,[40] except that social pressures for the elaboration of Islamic adoptive kinship more evidently stemmed from a *litigious laity*, as compared with the greater connivance of the Christian Church in promoting spiritual kinship.

Current ethnographies of Islamic milk kinship give an impoverished impression of its former political significance as a structure of cliental allegiances instituted through fosterage. Both Altorki and Khatib-Chahidi acknowledge its obsolescence by the mid-twentieth century in urban Saudi Arabia and Iran, which they mainly ascribed to the availability of infant feeding formulas, rendering reliance on the co-suckling services of kinswomen and neighbours unnecessary. Similar reasons have been asserted by scholars for milk kinship's current 'social insignificance' among rural villagers in Turkey and Palestine.[41] But, I suggest that traditional milk kinship in these regions was already becoming a social vestige by the early twentieth century, when national state formation — replacing earlier pre-Saudi, Qajar, Mughal and Ottoman patrimonial dynasties — undermined a former necessity for familial linkages with landlords and local administrators, who in the nineteenth century were privileged with the fostering or nursing services

of clients seeking favourable connections through milk kinship.[42] An abandonment of 'vertical' or extensive ties of adoptive kinship with such patrons in favour of a 'horizontal' intensification of kinship and communal ties is just what Mintz and Wolf [43] predict in these circumstances, and this seems borne out by several of the remembered cases of milk kinship reported in these ethnographies.

In Mughal histories, fosterage appears to confer several distinct advantages upon the children and their families involved in these transactions. Though the child was indeed the centre in the above discussed process, but the realm of fosterage stretched further considerably than that of child hood. It was an enduring contract. Intimate bonds created through fosterage carried immediate and long term consequences, which were above and beyond the everyday concerns of parenting. Through participation in fosterage, one not only secured maintenance in later life and the possibility of creating friendly or non-belligerent relations between families, but the child also secured better prospects for itself and its family. Mughal histories noted the several examples of fosterage directly benefiting the foster family. The nature of the Mughal political scene had also allowed the strength of foster ties to play a conspicuous role in the military sphere.

NOTES

1. We are not here arguing the fostering initiated by necessity, characteristically because the natal family of orientation has detached due to death or divorce, and fostering into voluntarily.
2. Eshter N. Goody, 'Forms of Pro-parenthood: The Sharing and Substitution of Parental Roles', in J. R. Goody, ed. *Kinship*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971, pp. 331-45.
3. H. Maine, *Ancient Law*, London: John Murray, 1861; idem, *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions*, London: John Murray, 1875, Lecture 8; S. R. Steinmetz, De 'Fosterage' of Opvoeding in Vreemde Families, *Amsterdam-Aardrijkskundig Genootschap Tijdschrift*, Serie 2. deel 10 (1893); reprinted in

Gesammelte kleinere Schriften zur Ethnologie und Soziologie, Vol. I. Groningen: P. Norhoff, 1928, pp.1-113.

4. W.H. Goodenough, 'Transactions in Parenthood', in V. Carroll, ed. *Adoption in Eastern Oceania,* Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania Monograph Series, No. 1, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1970, pp. 411-22.
5. Eshter N. Goody, *Parenthood and Social Reproduction,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p.114; see also idem, 'Sharing and Transferring Components of Parenthood: The West African Case', in M. Corbier, ed. *Adoption et fosterage*, Paris: Editions de Boccard, 1999, pp. 369-88; J.R. Goody, 'Adoption in Cross-cultural Perspective', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11, No. I (1969), pp. 55-78.
6. See Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* pp.106-14.
7. Patronate among traditional Muslim was known as *wala*', a term which also designated the clientage. See Patricia Crone, *Roman Provincial and Islamic Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, Chapter 3.
8. Goody, *Parenthood and Social Reproduction*, pp.1-34.
9. According to Richards and Streusand, *khanazadagi* even came to have a much wider meaning of pride in hereditary imperial service alone without the necessary impetus of an initial personal relationship with the emperor. As such, it permeated downwards to the middling and lower nobility. See John F. Richards, 'Norms of Comportment among Imperial Mughal Officers', in Barbara Daly Metcalf, ed. *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, pp.255-89; Douglas E. Streusand, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp.146-48.
10. The deployment of infant fosterage in clientage correlates idiosyncratic features of Aiden Southhall's 'segementary state' where affiliations of descent played a primary organizing role in delegated administration and in revenue collection. Aiden Southall, *Alur Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956; idem, 'A Critique of the Typology of States and Political Systems', in M. Banton, ed. *Political Systems and the Distribution of Power*, London: Tavistock, 1965, pp. 113-40; 'The Segmentary State in Africa and Asia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 30 (1988), pp.52-82. For the extension of Southall's segementary state, see B. Stein, 'The Segmentary State in South Indian History', in R.G. Fox, ed. *Realm and Region in Traditional India*, Delhi: Vikas, 1977, pp. 3-51; idem, 'The Segmentary *State*: Interim Reflections', Hermann Kulke, ed. *The State in India, 1000-1700*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997; R. G. Fox, Kin*, Clan, Raja and Rule*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971, pp. 56-57.
11. Goody, *Parenthood and Social Reproduction*, p.8.
12. Among the regulations that have survived are a number cited by Fildes from

Hammurabi's Babylon in c.1720-1686 BC and from Greek and Rome in the period 200 BC- 200 AD, see Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, 1988.

13. Adapted from Goody, *Parenthood and Social Reproduction.*
14. Ibn Babawayh al Qummi, *Man La Yahduruhu ' l-Faqih*, Nasaf : 1928-33,Vol. IV, p.119.
15. For instance, take the bitter recriminations exchanged by epistle between Aurangzeb and his father Shah Jahan, who, after a bloody succession struggle in which he wiped out his brothers, had been imprisoned in Agra fort. After complaining that his father had always favoured his elder brother Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb goes to the psychological heart of the fratricidal mess: 'you never loved me'. See Munis Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 2012.
16. G. W. Leitner, *Dardistan in 1866, 1886 and 1893*, Woking: Oriental University Institute, 1894, App. II, pp.8-9.
17. See C. Cahen, 'Atabak (Atabeg)', in H. A. R. Gibb, et al., ed. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Leiden: Brill.1960, Vol. I, pp.731-32.
18. Manucci, *Storia Do Mongor*, Vol. II, pp.31-32.
19. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol.III, p.107, see also, pp.299/212, 401/274-75; Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* , Vol.II, p.278.
20. Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, pp. 423-24.
21. Although the status of imperial women in Mughal world was quite high, yet it was usually men and only the noblemen at that, whose deeds were considered worthy of record – the records of Gulbadan Begam of course are unparalleled to normative story. For this rationale, it is unworkable to know precisely the nature of relationship between imperial girl children and the foster parents.
22. A term formed by joining the Turkish adjectival and relative suffix *liq* to *ata*, meaning 'father'. Although *ataliq* refers to the title and post of someone serving as a prince's guardian or tutor, it also engages a powerful notion of honorific kinship akin to that of a surrogate father. For the role of the *ataliq* in the post-Mongol Central Asian political context, see Yuri Bregel, 'Atalik', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* , Vol. II, Brill Online. See also W. M. Thackston, *Three Memoirs of Humayun*, Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers,1999, p. 9fn.
23. Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh*, 1971[1880].
24. Manucci, *Storia Do Mongor*, Vol. I, pp. 295-96. As we know Rajrup later soured Nadira Begum's milk by delivering military *coup de grace* to Dara Shikoh.
25. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, p. 36.
26. Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, Delhi: Blackwell Publishing, 2004/05, p. 163.
27. J. Schacht, '*Rada* [Suckling]', in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 463-64; see also *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Edition), Vol. VIII, pp.361-62.
28. Altorki, 'Milk Kinship in Arab Society, pp. 233-44; Khatib-Chahidi, 'Milk Kinship in Shiite Islamic Iran' in Maher, *The Anthropology of Breast-feeding*, pp. 109-32.

29. Schacht, '*Rada* [Suckling]', 1974; Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* pp. 34-38.
30. See S.D. Goitein, 'The Origin of the Vizierate', in *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968, pp. 168-96; M. Al-Rasheed, *Politics in an Arabian Oasis: The Rashidi Tribal Dynasty*, London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
31. Goitein, 'The Origin of the Vizierate', p. 180.
32. Goitein's observations may significantly explicate Ibn Khaldun's remarks on Abbasid-Barmecide cliental allegiance: 'Clients acquire nobility by being firmly rooted in their client relationship ... One knows that the Turkish clients of the Abbasids and, before them, the Barmecides .... achieved 'house' and nobility... by being firmly rooted in their relationship to the Abbasids dynasty... When [the Barmecides] became clients of the Abbasids, their original [Persian descent] was not taken into consideration. Their nobility resulted from their position as clients and followers of the Abbasids dynasty'.
33. Al-Azhary Sonbol, 'Adoption in Islamic Society: A Historical Survey', in E. W. Fernea, ed. *Children in the Muslim Middle East*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995, pp.45-67.
34. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* p.28.
35. Stern, *Marriage in Early Islam*, p.98.
36. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* p.71.
37. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* pp.22, 77.
38. F. Héritier-Augé, 'The Symbolics of Incest and its Prohibitions', in M. Izard and P. Smith, ed. *Between Belief and Transgression*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982, pp.152-79; see also his, *Two Sisters and their Mother: The Anthropology of Incest* ,trans. J. Herman, New York: Zone Books,1999.
39. Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* Chapter 3.
40. J. H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp.205-16; idem, *Christianizing Kinship: Ritual Sponsorship in Anglo-Saxon England*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998; B. Jussen, *Spiritual Kinship as Social Practice: Godparenthood and Adoption in the Early Middle Ages*, Pamela Selwyn, trans. Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2000, pp.36-43.
41. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs: Studies in a Muhammadan Village in Palestine*, p.22.
42. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, pp. 109-14; Al-Rasheed, *Politics in an Arabian* Oasis, p. 131f.
43. W. Mintz and E. R. Wolf, 'An Analysis of Ritual Co-parenthood (*Compadrazgo*)', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, pp.341-65.

EPILOGUE

It is impossible and moreover undesirable to take up all the different strands of the preceding chapters, and weave them into a clear pattern. I have started out without aiming to prove or disapprove grand theories or to test broad hypothesis, and this final section is called 'epilogue' advisedly, rather than 'conclusion'. Albeit the intense implication of the 'topic' that prominently appears in the Islamic jurispundence and Muslim historical records, there is no comprehensive evaluation of such relationships from a reasonable historical perspective, nor has its archival credentials been compared for exploration. Owing to the rareness of such studies, we do not have a firm conceptual frame work within which to analyze the issues accentuated in the present work. Therefore, my primary aim has been to bring together as much as possible of the material relating to Islamic milk kinship in comparison with Mughal history — who drew their origin from the nomadic tribe of Turko-Tatar whose customs and the associated sentiment undoubtedly grew up under conditions of life broadly similar to those which obtained over most of pre-or-Islamic Arabia — that could be found, and to shed some light on the area, remained rather in dark until now, which I suggest can makes significant contributions to the history of Mughal India. The practice of wet nursing indeed not only tells us about selection and background of nurses, their virtues, hierarchy among nurses but helps us to visualize the power model of that time. Scholars of the Mughal Empire have unnoticed the distinctive role of wet nurses in the life of the empire. As extrapolated in the present work, from the day wet nurses were selected for royal princes and for the duration of their lives, they were critical actors on the Mughal stage.

Though wet nursing appears perforce common in Mughal imperial family, it is hard to believe that the implications of the Islamic jurisprudential proposals were followed through: modern ethnographic studies also validate that popular conception of the extent of milk relations were often at odds with those of jurisprudence. That, apart from situational spontaneity, local notion or popular conceptions of milk kinship that it self vary had also necessitated the practice.

The most grim shortcoming common to the models describing Mughal state — a huge leviathan or paper tiger, 'medieval road roller' or spider's web, etc. — is that they generally isolate the state from social forces and overlook the extent of inter-connectedness stuck between state and society. Notwithstanding ample divergences, the historians subscribing to these discreet models have more in common than is actually perceptible. They share a framework that is synchronic, static and formal. They do not take into account the progressions of change and variance in the then political system and, consequently, present an overly gigantic conception of the state. Opinions on both sides — centralized-bureaucratic and patrimonial-bureaucratic state — are somewhat narrowly focused on its coercive and extractive capacities. Moreover, the state's relations with society were believed unidirectional, with authority flowing unequivocally and unilaterally from state to society not in any case vice versa. Unlike the vibrant functioning of the system, they generally ascribe to Medieval Indian society in passive and structural terms, a form of publicity parallel to the one envisaged by Jurgen Habermas, that is, 'the publicity of representative or the representative of publicness'.[1] In the representative of publicness, the public sphere was not constituted as a social realm, it was non-existent, and the public domain was appropriated by the ruling powers for the exhibit of their status, dignity and authority.[2] However, if we understand public sphere, as in the Hegelian context, a place for publicity in which the 'public' discussed, debated, judged social and political norms,

then we can certainly argue that it was an important locus of social agency in Medieval India. The public sphere indeed was not completely restricted by the ruling power to unilaterally represent political authority before the subject population.[3] The common people, for instance the nurses and foster relatives, several of them though not from noble origin, were important loci of social agency in Mughal Empire. If the imperial and other noble families used them for their political agenda to re-inscribe domination, this social group used them to resist it, to constrict power to the point of minimum disadvantage. These subordinate social groups favoured to participate within spaces that were open and indeterminate, but the public sphere that emerged from their participation was indeed for more pluralistic than the sites of rational deliberation celebrated by Habermas.

The two, though demure, interpretations of Mughal state seem static and synchronic, profoundly unsatisfactory. In the older view, the Mughal Empire was a centralized, bureaucratic leviathan penetrating with it's 'possess authority' into every corner of state and society.[4] In this model of the same kind to Habermas 'representative of publicness', the state is portrayed as insulated from the influence of its subjects contrary to social theorists such as Michel Foucault who view the power from the 'bottom up' – rather than viewing power on the macro-political level of [empire] and state – that is, the ways in which power operates in the lives of all members of the social order. The newer paradigm, on the other hand, posits a patrimonial-bureaucratic empire, all authority is shown to be emanating from the person of the Emperor, a Weberian model straddling the divide between the ancient patrimonial polity and the modern bureaucratic nation state. Conversely, I would like to adapt more insights of Foucault from his influential work on *Sexuality and Power* where he says that power is not something possessed by a small group of the top of the social hierarchy, but rather, a more diffuse and decentralized ... power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because

it comes from everywhere. He situates power within the context of a 'perpetual battle', a provisional and fickle outcome of conflicts among competing subjects.[5] Foucault's strategic approach to power underlines the role of human agency in the constitution and reproduction of power relations. His work emphasizes the need to study power as situated within an arena of various social organizations. The study has drawn upon his work in postulating the strength of familial and non-familial relations and its consequent effect on the policy of the Mughal state. This supposedly unconventional subject predisposed to question the politics of history writing has strived to demonstrate that the decisions of the Mughal emperor were formed by the politics and complexities of diverse social connections.[6] Another important effort of this study has been to disclose the involvement of the subjects of power in the political system, and to situate power itself within the context of a political and symbolic contestation between the power holders and the subordinate social groups.

Drawing on both the theoretical work and the contemporary evidences from Mughal archives analyzed though subjectively in the present work unequivocally underscores manifestly the fluidity of the state. As precisely squabbled by Foucault, 'power is not a property, but a strategy', and 'its effects of domination are attributing not to appropriations, but to dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques and functioning'. It is 'exercised rather than possessed', and that one should decipher it in a 'network of relations constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess'.[7] Intriguingly, in his model of strategic action, power does not emanate from a single source, but it is spread across the entire social body. Power in this sense is not a static entity, but a fluid series of relations that circulate through a net-like organization among all individuals in a social formation. 'Power comes from below .... Global and hierarchal structures of domination within a society depend on and operate through more local level capillary circuits of power

relationships'.[8] Therefore, the present study falls into that genre of socio-anthropological writings that envisages the milk ties and fosterage as an institution in which political power and relationship between state and society are structured, enforced, and, possibly, contested.

The Mughal milk ties and fostering as portrayed in the present work were a solemn contractual relationship and formed a primary bond between families and individuals so related — a bond, for obvious reasons in a segmentary system, on occasion more reliable than the bonds of actual kinship, since supporters acquired in this way could never become one's rivals for office within one's own lineage. Likewise, strategic fostering of offspring was an obvious way of consolidating clientship in competition with rival patrons, where the size of one's clientele determined a man's rank and honour-price. Obtaining fosterage of an emperor's child, on the other hand, could be a prudent investment for a freeman's social advancement: particularly if he could secure the supremacy of his royal or noble fosterling against the latter's dynastic rivals, earmarked for slaughter. Hence, the exclamations of Gerald of Wales in the twelfth century, echoed by many subsequent English writers: '*Woe to brothers among a barbarous people! Woe to kinsmen too! When alive, they pursue them to death; once dead, they wreak vengeance on others. If they have any love or loyalty, it is only for their foster-sons and foster-brothers'*. Similar opinions are held of the Irish, who '*preferring their foster-child and milk-siblings, would persecute their own brothers and kin*'.[9] Fears of family violence being done to children — by jealous brothers and agnatic cousins or uncles, as by step-mothers promoting their own off-spring — else look conjectural rationale for out-fostering of heirs. Mughal prince indeed viewed his biological siblings as political rivals and potential murderers, his *kokah* were for all intents and purposes his true 'brothers'. The prince and his *kokah* shared the entire range of sibling relations, from rivalry to love, framed by undisputed brotherly bonds that were

fixed in shared juvenile memories. The strength of these ties was such that *kokah* sometimes were the only people who could speak – as Khan Jahan Bahadur Kokah recurrently did to Emperor Aurangzeb – with courage and carelessness.[10] More pragmatic motive was simply to use children as pawns for the construction of familial clientage. Emperor and nobles in Mughal polities tended to be polygynous husbands, accumulating huge harems of wives and concubines, or passing through a rapid succession of legitimate and illegitimate unions; so dozens of infant offsprings might be fostered out to cement relations of clientage and political alliance. The eschewal of defined jural principles of elective or hereditary succession also had a pragmatic advantage of ensuring that all fostering clients had a vested interest in maintaining loyal dynastic allegiance on behalf of their entrusted wards. I may further, by way of alacrity, construe that such kinship allegiances operated both safety nets and climbing ropes in peculiar situation of political wavering – such was perhaps a perennial condition of the Mughal Empire. However, we coincide that such situations were for the most part punctured by the periods of constructive consolidation under Emperor Akbar and afterward. We may encapsulate with Michel Foucault's postulation, '... power is not an institution, and not a structure, neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with, it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategically situation in a particular society'[11]. The 'power' in idiom of Western political theory as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizen of the given state – applied bumpily in medieval history of India – appears to me less convincing in the context of government forms of Mughal India at least in the sixteenth century.

Lastly, structural reasons for the decline in the incidence of milk kinship appear as the shift in political organization away from so-called patrimonial dynasties towards modern state formations. Further, it also seems clear that in modern times

residence archetype have changed with a decline in huge mixed households and the introduction of tin baby milks has indeed rendered a practice such as wet nursing a choice rather than an obligation. However, despite this undoubted decline, milk kinship is far from a dead letter. It provides a useful and unique way of thinking through some of the ethical dilemmas that new reproductive technologies pose.[12] Furthermore, it allows couples to take advantage of such techniques while maintaining the propriety and convenience of their domestic lives, in keeping with its longstanding tactical uses. Saudi women's notion of intimidating to breastfeed their drivers to institute a symbolic maternal bond to gain their right to drive in the ultra-conservative kingdom is also associated with the same effect. It remains a prominent section within contemporary Islamic legal handbooks, and a field in which Islamic scholars can further parade their scholarship. Apart from Islamic legal discussions of new reproductive technologies, one can come across a number of contemporary examples of milk kinship in the pages of glossy magazines read across the most part of the Islamic world. Many such magazines feature *fatwa* columns, where religious specialists give *fatwa*s that is 'opinions' in response to readers' questions. For instance, in an issue of women's magazine *Sayyidati* (2000), Shaykh Abdallah bin Jibrin of the Saudi Arabian Fatwa Issuing Department is asked to clarify:[13]

'Is it possible for me to marry a girl whose older sister is the milk sister of my younger brother'?

He answers:

> There is no problem with marrying the milk sister of your brother if your brother was the one who suckled from her mother and you did not, and likewise if the suckling one, that is the sister of the girl in question, suckled from your mother. So the girl is permitted in marriage to you, and neither the suckling of her sister by your mother, nor the

> suckling of your brother by her mother affects you in this regard.

And, in the same issue, he faces another milk kinship query:

> I am a boy of sixteen and want to marry the daughter of my uncle [*'ammi*-, father's brother], but I have discovered that her younger sister suckled with my older sister. So is it possible for me to marry her, bearing in mind that she did not suckle from my mother?

His reply:

> It is not a problem that you marry her, and the suckling of her younger sister with your sister does not affect you. That is, she is considered marriageable [*ajnab1 yah*, 'a non-relative'], in as much as she did not suckle from your mother and you did not suckle from her mother nor from one of her sisters, so there is no kinship [*qar bah*] between you. As for her younger sister, she is not permissible for you or your brothers, as she suckled from your mother and became a sister to all of you.

These examples show that common believers are aware of the legal consequences of non-maternal breastfeeding in creating impediments to marriage. In other words, the rules placed down by the *Qur'an* and subsequently elaborated in *hadith* and *fiqh* literature still influence strategies of marriage and hence family structure in our days. To this day in modern Saudi Arabia, the concept of milk kinship is being promoted as a way to cement the family bonds of orphans into families, not just through conventional adoption but also by the stronger bond that milk kinship implies: as a way to strengthen the family bond of adopted children with their adoptive families – as equivalent of a blood relative. For example, Noura Al-Asheikh, General Director of women's issues at the Ministry of Social Affairs in Makkah, during an interview to *Arab News* (2007),[14] says that they try to promote milk kinship as ... to find families for orphaned children. 'We at the ministry try to study the possibility of finding a nursing mother in the hosting family to breastfeed the child to ensure its legal position in that family', she said.

While milk kinship offers a way of mediating the intellectual challenges that modern science offers to revealed religion, there

is surely another sense in which Western, 'scientific' understandings of kinship relatedness offer milk kinship itself an existential challenge. There is no ready 'scientific' reason why one should not be able to marry one's milk sister. Contemporary Islamic thinkers expend much intellectual energy in attempts to demonstrate the congruence of *Qur'anic* statements and scientific propositions, regarding embryology and astronomy, for example. But those whom we asked for an explanation of the 'logic' of milk kinship would only reply: 'It is not possible to define the reason for this legislation. One must work with the legal rulings as they arise in the legal texts'. It evidently also seems hard to believe that the full implications of the jurisprudential proposals were followed through: modern ethnographic accounts indeed suggest that popular conceptions of the extent of milk relations are often at odds with those of jurisprudence. That, apart from situational spontaneity, local notion or popular conceptions of milk kinship that may themselves vary also necessitated the practice. In modest sense, the gulf is noticeable between Islamic ethics of *rida'a* as established by the *Qur'an* and other branches of *hadith* and the Mughal milk kinship beliefs and practices. It may help us to have a handle on the larger issue, the Islam they had practised and how heavily it was accentuated by rudiments which were accretions from the confined environments that had contradicted the professed fundamentalist views.

NOTES

1. Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998.
2. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, pp. 4-7.
3. Amir Arjomand describes the civil society/or public sphere, as one of the three organizational loci of social agency in the Medieval Islamic world, the other two being the patrimonial state and the patrician household. See Said Amir Arjomand, 'The Law, Agency, and Policy in Medieval Islamic Society: Development of the Institutions of Learning from the Tenth to the Fifteenth

Century', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.41, No.2 (1999), pp. 262-93.

4. This view has also been challenged by economic historians such as Frank Perlin, David Washbrook and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, who believe that because of fragile central control in many areas the proportion of agricultural produce actually collected was much less than claimed by Irfan Habib and many others. A parallel nuance view can be obtained in Balkrishan Shivram, *Jagirdars in the Mughal Empire,* Delhi: Manohar, 2008.
5. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, pp.92-95.
6. Historians have increasingly made efforts to escape the bonds of the normative sources that tend to glorify their patrons, stressing their success and passing lightly over their failures. The studies are now being made of the functioning of the system, as opposed to its formal structure. The emperor is seen as one element among many in a political system, not as simply a despot or autocrat ruling without limitations. Historians are interested in what have been called 'ideas of structural relativity' that is, of 'dynamic relationships of social entities moving within a defined structural whole'. See R.E. Frykenberg, ed. *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, enlarged edn. Delhi: Manohar, 1979 [1969], p.xx.
7. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp.26-27.
8. James D. Faubion, ed. *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Volume 3*, New York: New Press, 2001, p. xxvii.
9. Giraldus Cambrensis [Gerald of Wales], *Topographia Hibernica* [Topography of Ireland], Opera V. J. D. Dimock, ed. London: Longmans, 1867, pp.167-68; *Descriptio Kambriae* [Description of Wales], Opera VI. J. D. Dimock, ed. London: Longmans, 1868, pp. 211-12, English trans. L. Thorpe, *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978, pp.261.
10. Bhimsen Saxsena, *Tarikh-i-Dilkasha*, p. 202.
11. Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume I*, p.92-93. The power as Foucault advocates 'must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization'.
12. See for e.g., Morgan Clarke, 'New Kinship, Islam and the Liberal Tradition: Sexual Morality and New Reproductive Technology in Lebanon', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 14, 1 (2008), pp.153-69; idem, Islam and New Kinship: Productive Technology and the Shariah in Lebanon. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009.
13. *Sayyidatī*, Vol. XX, No. 1016 (2000), p.90. See also *Majallat al-Azhar* (al-Azhar University periodical), 58(1985-86), pp.1116, 1878; 59 (1986), p.207; 59 (1987), pp. 1391, 1559; 68(1994), pp.779-80.
14. *Arab News*, 7 September 2007; available at *http:// www. arabnews. com*; accessed on 15/6/2010.

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Plate 2: ‘The infant Akbar placed in the care of his nurses by his mother Maryam Makani’, *Akbar Nama*, MS Or.12988, fol.20v. © British Library Board, London.

Plate 1: ‘Ghazan Khan as a baby with his Mother and Nurse’, Rashid al-Din, *Jami al-Tawarikh*, MS. Suppl. Pers. 1113, fol.210v. © Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris.