ASPECTS OF EARLY URDU LITERARY CULTURE AND HISTORY

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History, Faith, and Politics

Using the term "early Urdu" is not without its risks. "Urdu" as a language name is of comparatively recent origin, and the question of what was or is "early Urdu" has long since passed from the realm of history, first into the colonialist constructions of the history of Urdu/Hindi, and then into the political and emotional space of Indian (=Hindu) identity in modern India. For the average Hindi-user today, it is a matter of faith to believe that the language he knows as "Hindi" is of ancient origin, and its literature originates with Ḵhusrau (1253-1325), if not even earlier. Many such people also believe that the pristine "Hindī" or "Hindvī" became "Urdu" sometime in the eighteenth century, when the Muslims "decided" to veer away from "Hindī" as it existed at that time, and adopted a heavy, Persianised style of language which soon became a distinguishing characteristic of the Muslims of India. In recent times, this case was most elaborately presented by Amrit Rai (Amrit Rai 1984). Rai's thesis, though full of inconsistencies or tendentious speculation rather than hard facts, and of fanciful interpretation of actual facts, was never refuted by Urdu scholars as it should have been.

Quite a bit of the speculation that goes by the name of scholarly historiography of Hindi/Urdu language and literature today owes its existence to the fortuity of nomenclature. Early names for the language now called Urdu were, more or less in this order: 1) Hindvī; 2) Hindī; 3) Dihlavī; 4) Gujrī; 5) Dakanī; and 6) Reḵhtah. Until about the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Dakanī continued to be the name for the form of the language used in the Deccan.

The English, however, seem from the first to have found a set of names of their own liking, or invention. Edward Terry, companion to Thomas Roe at Akbar's court, described the language in his *A Voyage to East India* (London, 1655) as "Indostan," saying that it was a powerful language which could say much in a few words, had a high content of Arabic and Persian, but was written differently from Arabic and Persian (Cohn [1985] 1994:300). Other names that the English seem to have used for this language include "Moors," "Hindoostanic," "Hindoostanee," and "Indostans." The latter's existence is attested by the *Oxford English Dictionary*; the others we'll encounter as this paper progresses. With the exception of "Hindustani," no native speaker seems to have used, or even been familiar with, these words as language names.

In the North, both "Reḵhtah" and "Hindī" were popular as names for the same language from sometime before the eighteenth century, and the name "Hindī" was used, in preference to "Reḵhtah," from about the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, the spoken language was almost always referred to as "Hindī." Even in the early twentieth century, the name "Hindī" could be used--as it was by Iqbāl, for example--to refer to Urdu. "Hindvī" was in use until about the end of the eighteenth century. Muṣḥafī (1750-1824) says in his first *dīvān*, compiled around 1785 (Muṣḥafī 1967:91),

/Oh Muṣḥafī, put away Persian now,

Hindvī verse is the mode of the day./

"Urdu" as a name for the language seems to occur for the first time around 1780. All, or almost all, the earliest examples are from Muṣḥafī again. He says in his first *dīvān* (Muṣḥafī 1967:38),:

> /Muṣḥafī has, most surely,
> claim of superiority in Reḵhtah--
> That is to say, he has expert knowledge
> of the language of (the) *urdū*./

"Urdu" may here mean the city (of Shāhjahānābād) rather than the language. In the following instance, from the fourth *dīvān*, compiled around 1796, the reference seems clearly to the language name (Muṣḥafī 1969:578):

> /They put *gosh* and *chashm* everywhere in place of *nāk* and *kān*,
> And believe that their language is the language called "Urdu"/

The name "Urdu" seems to have begun its life as *zabān-e urdū-e muʿallā-e shāhjahānābād* (the language of the exalted City/Court of Shāhjahānābād [=Delhi]). It originally seems to have signified Persian and not Urdu. It soon became shortened to *zabān-e urdā-e muʿallā*, then to *zabān-e urdū*, and then to *urdū*. The authors of *Hobson Jobson* cite a reference from 1560 in support of "urdu bazaar" (camp-market). They also claim that the word *urdū* came to India with Bābur (1526), and that his camp was called *urdū-e muʿallā* (=the exalted camp, or court), and the language that grew up around that court/camp was called *zabān-e urdā-e muʿallā* (Yule and Burnell [1886] 1986:646). While the citation is obviously correct, the commentary of the authors is wrong for many reasons: there were plenty of Turks in India before Bābur; Bābur never had an extended stay in Delhi; Hindī/Hindvī/Dihlavī was already a language in and around Delhi before Bābur. No new language grew up in Northern India consequent upon the advent of the Mughals there.

By the eighteenth century, if not sooner, the word *urdū* meant "the city of Delhi." It continued to retain this sense until at least the early nineteenth century. Inshā and Qatīl say in *Daryā-e laṯāfat* (The River of Lightness and Subtlety) (1807), that "the residents of Murshidabad and ʿAẕīmābād [=Patna], in their own estimation, are competent Urdu speakers and regard their own city as the *urdū*"; Inshā means that they are really provincial, and not true citizens of Shāhjahānābād (Inshā 1850:116).

Although many of the Mughal royals, including Bābur himself, knew "Hindī" in some measure (later Mughals knew at least one Indian language quite well), Urdu became the language around the Court only in January 1772 when Shāh ʿĀlam II (r.1759-1806) moved to Delhi. The Court's official language remained Persian, but Shāh ʿĀlam II, because of his long sojourn in Allahabad, and personal predilection, spoke "Hindī" on informal occasions, and was also a substantial author in that language. In his prose narrative *Dāstān ʿajāʾib ul-qiṣaṣ* (The Strangest of Stories), Shāh ʿĀlam identified the language of the tale as "Hindī" (Shāh ʿĀlam 1965:26). He began composing the work around 1792/3, and left it unfinished, probably due to his blindness; the text that he left covers 600 printed pages.

Further evidence is provided in the Persian literature of the time. Around 1747-52, Sirāj ud-Dīn ʿAlī Ḵhān-e Ārzū (1687/8-1756), the major linguist and Persian lexicographer of his time, composed *Navādir ul-alfāẕ* (Rare and Valuable Among Words), in which he constantly uses both *urdū* and *urdū-e muʿallā* to mean Delhi. Commenting on the word *chhinel* for instance, he says, "We who are from Hind, and live in the *urdū-e muʿallā*, do not know this word" (Ḵhān-e Ārzū 1992:214). In another work he declares: "Thus it is established that the

most excellent and normative speech is that of the *urdū*, and the Persian of this place is reliable...and poets of [various] places, like Ḵẖāqānī of Sharvān, and Niẓāmī of Ganjah, and Ṡanāʾī of Ġhaznīn, and Ḵẖusrau of Delhi, spoke in the same established language, and that language is the language of the *urdū*" (Ḵẖān-e Ārzū 1992:32). It is thus obvious that in the 1750's, the terms *urdū*, *urdū-e muʿallā*, and *zabān-e urdū-e muʿallā* did not, at least among the elite, mean the language that is known as Urdu today.

Shāh ʿĀlam II, with his knowledge of languages (including Sanskrit), patronage and love for "Hindī," and practice of "Hindī" literature, gave the latter language respectability by using it informally around the Court. As we saw above, in 1792-3 Shāh ʿĀlam II was describing the language of his *dāstān* as Hindī. The name *zabān-e urdū-e muʿallā* should have begun to mean "Hindī" around 1790-5; and at any rate, from a date not earlier than January 1772. In 1796, John Gilchrist published a grammar of the "Hindoostanee Language." In it he included examples from "the best poets who have composed their several works in that mixed Dialect, also called Oordoo, or the polished language of the Court, and which even at this day pervades with more or less purity, the vast provinces of a once powerful empire" (Gilchrist 1796:261).

Ḵẖān-e Ārzū often uses the term "the Hindī of the books" or "learned Hindī" (*hindī-e kitābī*) for Sanskrit. In his long masnavi [*maṡnavī*] called *Nūh Sipihr* (Nine Heavens, 1317-18), Ḵẖusrau called it plain "Sanskrit," and said that it was "a special language, essential for a Brahmin, named 'Sanskrit' from the ancient times. Common people don't know anything of its do's and dont's, only Brahmins do; and not all Brahmans know it well enough to speak it, or compose poetry in it" (Ḵẖusrau 1948:180). Since in the North, the Nāgarī script was available perhaps only to the Brahmins, the Kāyasthas, after breaking away from the Brahmins in the fifteenth century, gradually developed a Nāgarī-based script of their own, and called it Kaithī. Now practically unknown, it survived in many parts of North India until well into the nineteenth century (King 1994). At least in part because of the non-availability of a popular, universally utilised script, most of the literatures produced in the developing North Indian languages must have been oral. Hindī/Hindvī/Dihlavī was lucky to have the Persian script available for it right from the beginning, because the earliest literary use of the language was made by the Muslims, most of whom were Sufis or were attached to Sufi houses as followers or disciples, like Ḵẖusrau.

In late-eighteenth-century colonial encounters, the name that the British most favoured for Hindvī/Hindī was "Hindustani." This was perhaps because it seemed orderly and logical for the main language of "Hindustan" to be called "Hindustani," just as the language of England was English, and so on. "Hindustani" as a language name was not entirely unknown. Sayyid Sulaimān Nadvī cites occurrences of it in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Persian texts; he himself in fact favours it over "Urdu" as a language name because of the negative associations of the latter (Sulaimān Nadvī 1939:103-07). Yet "Hindustani" never became popular; as a language name it does not occur in any major Persian dictionary.

The British identified "Hindustani" largely as a "Muslim" language, though they also granted that it was spoken, or at least understood, all over India. *Hobson-Jobson* describes "Hindostanee" as

> the language that the Mahommedans of Upper India, and eventually the Mahommedans of the Deccan, developed out of the Hindi dialect of the Doab chiefly, and the territory around Agra and Delhi, with a mixture of Persian vocables and phrases, and a readiness to adopt other foreign words. It is also called *Oordoo*, i.e., the language of the Urdu ('Horde') or Camp. This language was for a long time a kind of Mahommedan *lingua franca* over all India, and still possesses that

character over a large part of the country, and among certain classes (Yule and Burnell [1886] 1986:417-18).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1993) is even more explicit in making the identifications made by Yule and Burnell in 1886, defining "Hindustani" as:

> The language of the Muslim conquerors of Hindustan, being a form of Hindi, with a large admixture of Arabic, Persian, and other foreign elements; also called *Urdu*, i.e. *zaban-e Urdu*, language of the camp, sc. of the Mughal conquerors. It later became a kind of *lingua franca* over all India, varying its vocabulary according to the locality and the local language (*O.E.D.* 1993:769).

Thus both *Hobson-Jobson* and the *O.E.D.* define "Hindustani" in conformity with British perceptions, or policy: namely, there are two languages, Hindustani for the Muslims, Hindī for the Hindus.

The name "Hindustani" never caught on; most native speakers preferred "Hindī" or "Reḳhtah." Somewhat grandly, Gilchrist observed, (Gilchrist [1798] 1802:i):

> Having in my English and Hindoostanee Dictionary given an ample detail of this language, as far as European writers are any way connected with it, I may proceed to state--Hindoostan is a compound word, equivalent to *Hindoo*-land or *Negro*-land, and too well known to require any description here. It is chiefly inhabited by Hindoos and Moosalmans; whom we may safely comprise, as well as their language, under the general, conciliating, comprehensive term Hindoostanee, and which I have adopted for the above and the following reasons.

> This name of the country being modern, as well as the vernacular tongue in question, no other appeared so appropriate as it did to me, when I first engaged in the study and cultivation of the language. That the natives and others call it also *Hindī*, *Indian*, from *Hind*, the ancient appellation of *India*, cannot be denied; but as this is apt to be confounded with *Hinduwee, Hindoo,ee, Hindvee*, the derivative from *Hindoo*, I adhere to my original opinion, that we should invariably discard all other denominations of the popular speech of this country, including the unmeaning word *Moors*, and substitute for them *Hindoostanee*, whether the people here constantly do so or not: as they can hardly discriminate sufficiently, to observe the use and propriety of such restrictions, even when pointed out to them.

> *Hinduwee*, I have treated as the exclusive property of the Hindus alone; and have therefore constantly applied it to the old language of India, which prevailed before the Moosulman invasion; and in fact, now constitutes among them, the basis or ground-work of the *Hindoostanee*, a comparatively recent superstructure, composed of Arabic and Persian, in which the two last may be considered in the same relation, that Latin and French bear to English: while we may justly treat the *Hinduwee* of the modern speech of Hindoostani, as the Saxon of the former, thus:
> |SAXON |LATIN |FRENCH |ENGLISH
> |HINDUWEE |ARABIC |PERSIAN |HINDOOSTANEE

Notice how cheerfully and confidently Gilchrist assumes the right to decide for the natives, since they themselves have no discrimination and don't know what's good for them. Also, he perpetrates a canard on Persian, and Persian speakers (among whom, at that time, there

were many Indians as well), by saying that in Persian "Hindū" means "Negro."[1] Though he recognised Hindvī as the "basis or ground-work of the Hindoostanee," and having the same relation to "Hindustani" as Anglo-Saxon had to English, he omits to mention, or doesn't know, that Hindvī was not a separate language, but was merely an early name for the same language for which he was now prescribing the name "Hindoostanee."

Nothing more need be said about Gilchrist's intentions, or his competence in historical philology. We might however note in passing that Gilchrist lifted most of his "theory" from Nathaniel Brassey Halhed (1751-1830) (Rocher 1983), who was one of the first to have written a grammar of the Bengali language (1778). Halhed identified a language called "Hindustanic" that "had two varieties, one which was spoken over most of Hindustan proper and 'indubitably derived from Sanskrit.'" The other was "developed by the Muslim invaders of India, who could not learn the language spoken by the Hindus, who, in order to maintain the purity of their own tongue, introduced more and more abstruse terms from Sanskrit." Thus the Muslims introduced "exotic" words "which they superimposed on the 'grammatical principles of the original Hindustanic'" (Cohn [1985] 1994:298).

This doesn't need much comment, except that here we can see the source, not only for Gilchrist's grand prescriptions, but also the definitions of the words "Urdu" and "Hindustani" from Fallon (1866) through Platts (1884) and the *Hobson-Jobson* (1886), to the *O.E.D.* (1993). Fallon declared "Urdu" to mean:

> an army, a camp; a market. *urdu,i mu'alla*, the royal camp or army (generally means the city of *Dihli* or *Shahjahanabad*; and *urdu,i mu'alla ki zaban*, the court language). This term is very commonly applied to the Hindustani language as spoken by the Musalman population of India proper (Fallon [1866] 1987:28).

And Platts defined it as:

> Army; camp; market of a camp; s.f. (=*urdū zabān*), the Hindūstānī language as spoken by the Muhammadans of India, and by Hindūs who have intercourse with them or who hold appointments in the Government courts &c. (It is composed of Hindī, Arabic, and Persian, Hindī constituting the back-bone, so to speak):-- *urdū-i-mu'allā*, The royal camp or army (generally means the city of Dehli or Shāhjahānābād; the court language (=*urdū-i-mu'allā kī zabān*); the Hindūstānī language as spoken in Delhi (Platts [1886] 1974:40).

The *O.E.D.* (p. 2203) identifies "Urdu" with "Hindustani," and goes on to distinguish "Hindustani, the lingua franca," from the tongue that is the official language of Pakistan! It would be difficult to beat these examples for their insouciant flattening of logical anomalies.

By contrast, Gilchrist at least had some moments of doubt, and tried to explain away the facts as best he could so as to bring them in accord with his notions. Thus, in his *A Dictionary, English and Hindoostanee* (Calcutta, 1790), he declared that Sanskrit was derived from "Hinduwee," which was spoken over much of India before the Muslim invasion. He further suggested that repeated invasions of Muslims resulted in the creation of "Hindustani": "Muslims referred to this language as 'Oorduwer' in its military form, 'Rekhtu' in its poetical

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[1]This canard has found echoes in the modern Indian English-language press, where absurd meanings have been foisted on the Persian word "Hindū." The latest is by Wagish Shukla, a normally careful and humane scholar. Reviewing Vasudha Dalmia's book on Bharatendu Harishchandra, Shukla claims that in Persian, "Hindū" means "nigger" (Shukla 1997:20).(*The Book Review*, New Delhi, October 1997, p. 20).

form, and 'Hindee' as the everyday language of the Hindoos" (Cohn [1885] 1994:304). Note the mutilation of the term *urdū-e muʿallā*: Gilchrist doesn't know that it is a compound, and its first part standing alone is meaningless, so that no one ever wrote, or spoke, "*urdū-e*." Note also the entirely imaginary classification of the language: military, literary, and Hindu.

Here, we can also see the source for Gilchrist's confident prediction, "the Hindoos will naturally lean to the *Hinduwee*, while the Moosulmans will of course be more partial to Arabic and Persian; whence two styles arise" (Gilchrist [1798] 1802:2). That the prediction found many ways of coming very nearly true should not permit us to ignore the fact that it was based on premises that were morally and historically false.

Since the name "Hindustani" didn't work in spite of Gilchrist's superior wisdom, the British were obliged, eventually, to give it up. They found a better alternative: "Urdu" was a name that didn't have the faintest reverberations of a Hindu link. On the contrary: since it was a Turkish word, its Muslim connections were obvious. As we have seen, Shāhjahānābād came gradually to be called *urdū-e muʿallā*, and the language spoken there became "the language of the *urdū-e muʿallā*." We have also seen Ḳhān-e Ārzū describing Persian as "the language of the *urdū-e muʿallā*." Now with the patronage and practice of Shāh ʿĀlam II, "Hindī," rather than Persian, began to be called "the language of the *urdū-e muʿallā*." Though the shortened name "Urdu" didn't instantly become universally popular, the etymology of the word *urdū*, and the fact that in Reḳhtah/Hindī the word *urdū* did mean, among other things, "camp, camp-market," made it easy for the British to propose that Hindī/Reḳhtah was born in Muslim army camp-markets, and that's why it was called *zabān-e urdū-e muʿallā*.

The earliest printed source from an Indian author for this fiction seems to be Mīr Amman Dihlavī's *Bāḡh o bahār* (Garden and Spring), a prose romance produced in 1803 at the College of Fort William under Gilchrist's direction, as a text for teaching Urdu/Hindustani to British civil servants. Mīr Amman says that he wrote the story in the "language of *urdū-e muʿallā*." He adds that he was asked by Gilchrist to "translate" the story into "pure Indian speech, as spoken among themselves by the people of the *urdū*, Hindu or Muslim, women, men, children and young people" (Mīr Amman 1992:2, 6). In the pages following, he proceeds to apprise the reader of the "true facts about the language of the *urdū*." He says:

> ...Finally, Amīr Taimūr (with whose House the rule still remains, though only in name), conquered India. Due to his advent, and extended sojourn here, the bazaar of the army entered the city. And that's why the market-place of the city came to be called *urdū*....When King Akbar ascended the throne, people of all communities, hearing of the appreciation and free flow of generosity as practiced by that peerless House, came from all four sides of the land and gathered in his Presence. But each had his distinctive talk and speech. By virtue of their coming together for give and take, trade and commerce, question and answer, a [new] language of the camp-market came to be established (Mīr Amman 1992:7-8).

Mīr Amman didn't tell the reader that there was a gap of a century and a half, and a history of dynastic change, between the coming of Taimūr (1398) and the advent of Akbar (r.1556-1605). Then, Akbar never lived in Delhi, and the only time he would have had an army camping near Delhi would have been in 1556, when he fought Hemū at Panipat, 80 kilometres away. Most importantly, Mīr Amman omitted to mention that the language in question was called Hindvī/Hindī from early times, and "Hindī" was its commonest name in his day. But the immense success of *Bāḡh o bahār* as a school text ultimately caused Mīr Amman's narrative to prevail, in every sense of the word.

It didn't happen quickly, though. It took a long time for "Hindi" and "Urdu" to take root as names of two different languages. The native speaker's resistance to the term "Urdu" may have had something to do with the fact that the name suggested false images about the origins and nature of the language. As late as December 1858, Ġhālib was uncomfortable with "Urdu" as a language name, and used it as masculine in a letter to Shiv Nārāʾin Ārām; language names are invariably feminine in Urdu, but *urdū* in the sense of "camp, camp-market" is masculine (Ġhālib 1984-93:3:1067). Sayyid Sulaimān Nadvī, as we have seen, preferred "Hindustani" for just those reasons; "Hindī," of course, was unavailable to him by then (Sulaimān Nadvī 1939:101-02).

Aḥad ʿAlī Ḳhān Yaktā, a poet and physician of Lucknow, wrote *Dastūr ul-faṣaḥāt* (The Exemplar of Proper Speech), a small tazkirah-like tract on Urdu syntax--he uses both "Hindī" and "Urdu" for the language--in or before 1798 (Yaktā 1943:27, preface). He wrote the book in Lucknow, uninfluenced by British political considerations. The *Dastūr* contains the earliest printed observations made by a native and knowledgeable Urdu speaker on the origins of Urdu:

> And the reason for the appearance of this exquisite language is...that the wise and the learned of the time and the age, and the masters of all arts and sciences, persons of excellence and erudition, poets and people from good families, wherever they were, came from all sides and all shores of the world, travelled to this large and desire-fulfilling territory, and attained their heartfelt wishes and purposes. And most of them adopted this paradise-adorned land as their own native place. Thus, due to their coming and going to the Court, and having to deal with the local people, it became necessary for them to converse in this language.

> Inevitably, during intercourse between them and these, and these and them, in the course of conversations, they mixed each other's vocabulary as much as needed, and got their business done. When this had continued over a long span of time, a state was reached when, by virtue of absorption of words and connections of phrases from each other, it could be described as a new language; for neither the Arabic remained Arabic, nor Persian, Persian; nor on the same analogy, did the dialects and vernaculars included under the rubric "Indian" [which had contributed to the new language] retain their original form. But even at this time, a single mode, as should be, had not stabilised....And every community and group used to privilege its own idiom over the others (Yaktā 1943:4-5).

Yaktā goes on to say that ultimately, persons of "knowledge and wisdom, having no choice" laid down a standard register: among its requirements was speech that was

> very clear, familiar to the temperament, and easily comprehensible to the plebeian and the elite....But speech conforming to the above conditions is not to be found except among those inhabitants of Shāhjahānābād who reside within the city's ramparts, or in the language of the offspring of these honourable persons, who have migrated to other cities and taken up residence there. Thus the language of those inhabitants of Lucknow who are not its ancient residents, and were not there in the past, is nowadays closer to the standard speech (Yaktā 1943:5-6).

These remarks are quite in accord with the privilege that the Delhi idiom arrogated to itself soon after Hindī/Reḳhtah became the main medium of literature there. The literary culture of Delhi became, to all intents and purposes, Urdu's literary culture (as we will see in a later section of

this essay). The British apparently had no problems with this. But stories about the origin of Urdu were another matter.

Yaktā's observations about the origin of Urdu must have been based on the common perception of educated native speakers of those times. These perceptions were hardly suitable material for stories about Urdu as the language of "Muslim invaders" and "conquerors," a language that only those Hindus had adopted--practically under duress--who were in the employ of a Muslim ruler. Yaktā was no linguist, historical or comparative, and did not know that the dialect now called *kharī bolī*, the developed form of which is Urdu, had existed prior to the Muslims. Muslims functioned as catalysts in refashioning the dialect into a fully fledged language. But these are the finer points which matter only to the scholar. The broad story of Urdu's birth and growth as given by Yaktā is accurate enough, and it differs from Mīr Amman's British-approved story in every important respect.

There is evidence to suggest that the Hindus, for whose "benefit" a whole new linguistic tradition was being constructed in the nineteenth century, were initially not too happy either. Christopher King says that a class of "educated Hindi speakers, committed to a style of the khari boli continuum which differentiated them from the Urdu speakers," had not yet arisen in U.P. by the 1850's. In King's words, "to find statements by Hindus educated in the Sanskrit tradition, denying the existence of this new style of khari boli, then, should come as no surprise." He then narrates the following incident:

> In 1847, Dr J. R. Ballantyne, Principal of the English department of Benares College, decided to improve the style of what he termed 'Hindi' written by students of the Sanskrit College (which formed the older part of the institution)....He ordered exercises to be written in Hindi by some of his students,...and finally losing patience with the apathy and resistance he encountered, directed them to write an essay on the following question: 'Why do you despise the culture of the language you speak every day of your lives, of the only language which your mothers and sisters understand?'....A dialogue ensued which made clear that the young men had neither a clear conception of what Ballantyne meant by Hindi nor any sense of loyalty to it.

> As the reply of their spokesman showed, the students had no awareness of Hindi in the sense of a standardised literary dialect:

> "We do not understand what you Europeans mean by the term Hindi, for there are hundreds of dialects, all in our opinion equally entitled to the name, and there is here no standard as there is in Sanskrit."

> ....Finally, they had no sense of attachment to Ballantyne's 'Hindi,' or in other words, they accepted the equation Urdu = Hindu + Muslim....

> These attitudes have particular significance when we realize that five decades later, Hindu students at the same college founded the Nagari Pracharini Sabha to promote Hindi and the Nagari script (King 1994:90-91).

That the British finally succeeded in their purpose, is history. That the purpose was motivated by colonial arrogance, and by politics, and that its fulfilment engendered a special kind of faith in "Hindi/Hindu" identity, and evoked strong emotions, and hot schemes, is also history.

Vasudha Dalmia quotes Grierson (1889) as saying that the "wonderful" hybrid language known to Europeans as "Hindi" was "invented" by the Europeans themselves. She goes on to say that by the sixties of the last century, "the nationalist supporters of Hindi" who were involved deeply in "the creation of myths and geneologies [sic] concerning the origin of

Hindi" would have treated as "preposterous" any suggestion that "their language was an artificial creation." Their belief was that "Hindi was spoken in homes across the breadth of North India and this had been the case before the Muslim invasion....As often, there was consensus at least on this point among the imperialists and the nationalists: that the Hindus possessed a language of their own, which set them off not only from contemporary Muslims, but also from Muslims in the past. The sole difference of opinion lay therein, that the English stressed their own agency in the creation of their language; it was they who had retrieved it from the Muslim debris, which had collected in and around it, whereas the Hindus, though admitting that there was no literature in the modern language, yet claimed continuity through the ages" (Dalmia 1997:149-50).

Remaking History, Refashioning Culture

This brief historical account of the origin myths and realities of the terms "Hindi/Urdu" was necessary because scholars often suggest, or even state, that the language today known as "Hindi" is the rightful claimant to the space in Indian literary history occupied, at least up to the end of the seventeenth century, by the language today called "Urdu." In regard to Braj Bhāshā, Avadhī, and similar modern Indian languages, claims that modern Hindi subsumes those languages predate the partition of India. As King puts it, due to the comparative youth of the *kharī bolī* Hindi literary tradition, "Hindi supporters of the nineteenth, and Hindi historians of the twentieth century usually include the older literay traditions of Braj Bhasha, Avadhi, and other regional standards in discussing the 'Hindi' literature of the more distant past. When discussing the literature of the recent past and present, they largely ignore these other traditions in favour of Khari Boli....Part of the process of construction of myths through which elites attach value to symbols of group identity, then, seems to involve ignoring ambiguities or contradictions in these symbols" (King 1994:25). In regard to Urdu's space, such claims postdate the partition. The first major effort in this direction was apparently made by Babu Ram Saksena in his *Dakanī hindī* (Saksena 1952).[2] However, no discussion can now afford to ignore the fact that there *are* two claimants to a single linguistic and literary tradition, and the whole issue is more political than academic.

The positing of Hindi against Urdu had far-reaching effects on the literary culture of Urdu. Very few of these have been documented, much less discussed and explained in the proper perspective.

A byplay was going on at the time modern Hindi was being groomed to occupy centre stage on the Indian linguistic and literary scene. It was the denigration of Urdu on "moral" and "religious" grounds. Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-1885), for instance, who is widely regarded as "the father of modern standard Hindi," was at that time not only switching over from Urdu to Hindi, but also writing savage, if vulgar, satires mocking "the death of Urdu Begam"--among whose mourners were Arabic, Persian, Pushto, and Panjabi, for they shared a common, "foreign," script. Addressing the Education Commission of 1882, Bharatendu testified (in English), "By the introduction of the Nagari character they [the Muslims] would lose entirely the opportunity of plundering the world by reading one word for another and misconstruing the real sense of the contents....The use of Persian letters in office is not only an injustice to Hindus, but it is a cause of annoyance and inconvenience to the majority of the loyal subjects of Her Imperial Majesty" (Sengupta 1994:137).

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[2]I'm grateful to Professor Jafar Raza, of the University of Allahabad, for this information.

There were other anti-Urdu voices at that time, especially in Benares (now Varanasi), but Harishchandra's diatribes stand out, coming from a creative writer who began his career as an Urdu writer, and who still occupies a place in the history of modern Urdu literature. As late as 1871, Bharatendu Harishchandra wrote that his language, and that of the women of his community, was Urdu. In fact, belonging as he did to the *pachhāhīñ* (western) branch of the Agravāl clan, he perhaps didn't even know the folk language of the Banaras area of his time, and certainly looked down upon the *purabiyā* (eastern) branch of the clan (Dalmia 1997:118-19). No other Hindu writer seems to have switched from Urdu to Hindi around that time, but the name "Hindi" began to be used less and less for Urdu after the 1880's. The British also more or less gave up on "Hindustani" once the name "Urdu" became almost universally popular. Writing in 1874, Platts had compromised, publishing *A Grammar of Hindustānī or Urdū*. In 1879, Fallon had still named his dictionary *A New Hindustani English Dictionary*. But by the time Platts published his famous dictionary (1884), the new nomenclature was firmly in place: it was *A Dictionary of Urdū, Classical Hindī, and English*.

New Urdu writers continued to rise from among the Hindus, but the Muslims, perhaps unconsciously responding to the pressure of official British opinion, tended to exclude Hindu writers from the Urdu canon (and the Persian canon too, but that is another story.) In his enormously popular history of Urdu poetry called *Āb-e ḥayāt* (Water of Life, 1880), Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād (1831-1910) ignores numerous Hindu poets of the eighteenth century, including such major figures as Sarb Sukh Dīvānā (1727/8-1788), Jasvant Singh Parvānah (1756/7-1813), Budh Singh Qalandar (fl. 1770's), and Ṭīkā Rām Tasallī (fl. 1790's). Nearer his own time, Āzād makes only marginal mention of Ghanshyām Lāl ʿĀsī, a leading poet of Delhi and a pupil of Shāh Naṣīr (1760?-1838) (Āzād 1967:566). Āzād found only one Hindu poet worth more than passing mention: Dayā Shankar Nasīm (1811-1844), whom he discusses anachronistically along with Mīr Ḥasan (1727-1786), making it difficult for a reader to find Nasīm's account in a hurry (Āzād 1967:308-09; Fārūqī 1997).

In 1893, Alṭṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī (1837-1914) published his *Muqaddamah-e shiʿr o shāʿirī* (Introduction to Poetry and Poetics). It was an extensive theoretical statement on the nature of poetry, and an indictment of Urdu poetry in terms of British official ideas about what was wrong with it. Next to *Water of Life*, the *Muqaddamah* remains the outstanding Urdu prose critical work of the nineteenth century. It commands nearly absolute authority even now. The *Muqaddamah* is dotted with references to, and quotes from, Urdu poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the exception of four references to Dayā Shankar Nasīm--two of them quite perfunctory and all of them disapproving--there is no Hindu among them (Ḥālī 1953). By the end of the century a number of potential Urdu-readers were switching over to Hindi in Northern India, and many institutions and movements had sprung up there to do aggressive salesmanship of the Nagari script and modern Hindi, but the Hindu community continued to produce Urdu writers, and the end-of-century scene in the nineteenth century shows a number of dominating, or potentially dominating, Hindu literary figures in Urdu.

The harm, however, had been done. True, there were historians like R. W. Frazer, who said: "When [Urdu was] used for literary purposes by the Mussalmans, the vocabulary employed was mainly Persian or Arabic. When used as a *lingua franca*, for the people speaking the various dialects of Hindustan, the vocabulary is mainly composed of the common words of the market-place....High Hindi is purely a book language evolved under the influence of the English who induced native writers to compose works for general use in a form of Hindustani in which all the words of Arabic and Persian were omitted, Sanskrit words being employed in their

place" (Frazer [1898] 1915:265). (If he had said "by Mussalmans and Hindus" instead of merely "by the Mussalmans," he would have had it exactly right.) But such voices were few and far between.

In 1939, the Delhi station of the All India Radio broadcast a series of six talks entitled *Hindustānī kyā hai* (What is Hindustani?). The time and the subject were both fraught with emotion. Urdu's case was most forcefully presented by Brij Mohan Dattātreyah Kaifī and ʿAbd ul-Ḥaq. But among them all, Tārā Chand came out with the most historically succinct presentation. He said:

> ...For the Hindus, Lallūjī Lāl, Bādal Mishra, Benī Narāʾin, and others were ordered [by the authorities at the College of Fort William] to prepare books comprising prose texts. Their task was even more difficult. Braj did exist then as the language of literature, but it had prose barely in name. So what could they do? They found a way out by adopting the language of Mīr Amman, [Sher ʿAlī] Afsos, and others, but they excised Arabic/Persian words from it, replacing them with those of Sanskrit and Hindi [=Braj etc.] Thus, within the space of less than ten years, two new languages...were decked out and presented [before the public] at the behest of the foreigner....Both were look-alikes in form and structure, but their faces were turned away from each other...and from that day to this, we are wandering directionless, on two paths (Maktabah Jāmiʿah c.1939:11-12).

Tārā Chand thus clearly suggested the British political motivation; five years later, writing his monograph *The Problem of Hindustani*, he blamed the misguided "zeal" of some "college professors" at Fort William. His conclusion was, however, the same: the zeal of the professors led to the creation of "a new type of Urdu from which Persian and Arabic words were removed and replaced by Sanskrit words." Although this was done "ostensibly to provide the Hindus with a language of their own," the step had "far-reaching consequences," so that "India is still suffering from this artificial bifurcation of tongues" (Tārā Chand 1944:57-58; quoted in Farmān Faṯhpūrī 1977a:53).

The sane and dispassionate accounts of historians like Tārā Chand weren't enough to uproot the plant of doubt and suspicion, especially when it was fed and nurtured by waters from chauvinistic streams. Francis Robinson's conclusion that "an increasingly important development in the 1880's and 1890's [was] the tendency of the Hindi movement to become a communal crusade against the Urdu language" (Robinson 1974:75) is borne out by the report of the Education Commission set up by the British in 1882. In his evidence before the Commission, Shiv Prasād, a senior person in the Department of Education (then called "Public Instruction") in U.P., who had switched his support from Urdu to Hindi, said: "For Hindus, Hindi was a language purged of all the Arabic and Persian accretions which served to remind them of the Muslims' supremacy while the Nagri script had a religious significance....For Muslims on the other hand Hindi was dirty and they thought most degrading to learn it." Thus, he argued, in the "second half of the nineteenth century, Urdu and the Persian script in which it was written became a symbol of Muslim power and influence." Shiv Prasād was also unhappy over the popularity of Urdu--which, he somewhat inconsistently said, was becoming a mother tongue for the Hindus (Robinson 1974:36).

One of the cultural consequences of the Hindi-Nagari movement was the inculcation among Urdu speakers of feelings of guilt and inferiority about Urdu script and orthography. Not only Harishchandra as we have seen, but also other supporters of Nagari like Rajinder Lal Mitter, a culturally powerful and influential Westernizer in early modern Bengal, claimed that

Urdu's script was intrinsically inferior (Dalmia 1997:132-33, 418-19). The seed for these ideas too was sown by Gilchrist, who published the *Oriental Fabulist* (1803) to prove that "Hindoostanee, Persian, Arabic, Brij Bhasha, Bongla and Sanskrit" could all be written in the Roman script "with ease and correctness." The great success of the colonial discourse in India can be judged from the fact that a modern, liberal historian like Siddiqi actually admires Gilchrist for his proposal to Romanise the script of these languages: he looks upon it as a step toward the "unification" of the country (Siddiqi 1963:39-40). In fact the Roman script cannot (without diacritics) configure many important Urdu sounds, but the British introduced it for the Army's use anyway (Willatt 1941); apart from Army and missionary texts, Roman script never caught on. Nevertheless, calls for "improvements" in Urdu orthography, or even script, are still made, and not in "anti-Urdu" circles alone. The Urdu linguistic and literary community is perhaps the only one in the world that feels uncomfortable, and even guilty, about almost every aspect of its script and orthography. To this must be added a surreptitious feeling of guilt generated by the Urdu literary community's almost universal belief that Urdu was a "military language" after all.

The fault for this, I think, lies with Urdu historians from 1880 on, who didn't stop to examine the implications of the fact that if the name "Urdu" first came into use during the last few years of the eighteenth century, it could not possibly have any military implications. The only literary historian who did realise the anomaly here was Grahame Bailey.[3] He even offered a tentative explanation for the late appearance of the name "Urdu." Unfortunately, he also made a number of fanciful observations about the origin of Urdu, and his writings on this matter seem not to have been taken seriously. Bailey argued that "Urdu was born in 1027; its birthplace was Lahore, its parent Old Panjabi; Old Kharī was its step-parent; it had no direct relationship with Braj. The name Urdu first appears 750 years later" (Bailey 1938:1). And he noted some queries:

> (1) Why was there a delay of centuries in giving the name Urdu?
> (2) If a new name had to be given in the eighteenth century, why was this name chosen for the language when it had many, many years previously been given up for the army?
> (3) If the army was not called *urdū* till Babur's time, 1526, the language which had then existed for nearly 500 years must already have had a name. Why was that name given up? (Bailey 1938:6).

Grahame Bailey said that the problem was easier to state than solve; yet to him must go the credit of at least realising that there *was* a problem. Bailey in fact did suggest an answer, but with extreme diffidence: "Jules Bloch made a striking suggestion, which he admits is only an intuitive feeling required to be substantiated by proof, that the name Urdu is due to Europeans" (Bailey 1938:3). Bailey didn't investigate Bloch's idea further, for he felt that since Gilchrist always called the language "Hindustani," and in 1796 reported--as we have seen above--that the language was also called "Oordoo," it could not have been the British who introduced the name. This is quite true. But it was the British who popularised the name, for apparently political reasons. Even Bailey fell into the "military error" in believing that *urdū* means "army," and nothing more. In fact, there is no recorded instance of this word ever being used in the Urdu-Hindī-Reḳhtah-Dakanī-Gujrī language to denote "army." Its most popular meaning, in fact, was

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[3]I am grateful to Frances Pritchett for bringing to my attention Grahame Bailey's writings on this subject.

"the city of Shāhjahānābād." This is borne out even by the definitions of the word *urdū* from Fallon and Platts that I have cited above.

Similarly, the blame for not effectively refuting the theories about the antiquity of modern Hindi, and even its anteriority over Urdu, must lie with the historians of Urdu--all of whom failed to address this issue scientifically and logically, if they dealt with it at all. Premchand, not a historian by any means, had clearer ideas on this subject. He advocated the use of "Hindustani"--which he defined as a simplified Urdu/Hindi--but recognised that Hindi was not a separate language as such. In an address delivered at Bombay in 1934, he declared, "In my view, Hindi and Urdu are one and the same language. When they have common verbs and subjects, there can be no doubt of their being one" (Premchand 1983:108). Speaking in Madras before the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, also in 1934, he said, "The name 'Hindi' was given by the Muslims, and until just fifty years ago, the language now being described as 'Urdu' was called 'Hindi' even by the Muslims" (Premchand 1983:124).[4] But these, and other remarks like these, were like stray thoughts, not decisive, and having no force of theory. So fictions about Urdu's "Muslim military character" persisted, and are generally current even now.

Beginnings, Gaps, Speculations

Urdu literature perhaps began with Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān Lāhorī (1046-1121). Nothing survives of the "Hindī" *dīvān* that he is reported to have put together. We know about it from Muḥammad ʿAufī's *Lubāb ul-albāb* (Pure Essences of Intellects). Composed in Sindh around 1220-27, the *Lubāb* says of him, "The quantity of his verse is greater than that of all the poets, and he has three *dīvān*s: one Arabic, the other Persian, and the third Hindvī, and whatever from his poetry has been heard or come across [by me] is masterly and most pleasing" (ʿAufī 1954:423). Since the term "Hindī" was used occasionally in the Indian middle ages to denote any Indian language, a question has been raised about the Indian language in which Salmān actually wrote. Khusrau, writing a few decades after ʿAufī, helps to clarify the question.

In his masnavi *Nūh sipihr* (Nine Heavens) (1317-18), Khusrau devoted a whole long section to India. Placing the "Indian speech" above Persian and Turkish because of its "pleasing vocabulary," he went on to say:
/In short, it's quite without purpose
To try and gain the heart's pleasure
From the Persian, Turkish, or Arabic./

/Since I am Indian, it's better
That one draw breath
From one's own station. In this land
In every territory, there is
A language specific, and not so
By chance either. There are
Sindhī, Lāhorī [=Punjabi], Kashmīrī, Kibar (?),
Dhaur Samandarī [=Kannada], Telangī [=Telugu], Gūjar [=Gujarati],

Ma'barī [=Tamil], Gauṛī [=west Bengali dialect], and the languages
Of Bengal, Avadh, Delhi
And its environs, all within
Their own frontiers./

/All these are Hindvī, and
Are in common use
For all purposes since antiquity/ (Ḳhusrau 1948:179-80).

Despite the tentativeness and difficulty of making some of these glosses, one can see that Ḳhusrau distinguishes Lāhorī (=Panjabi) from other languages like Avadhī, or the *muṣaṭalaḥ* ("specific speech") of Delhi and its surrounds.

Earlier, in the magnificent *Dībāchah* (Preface) to his *dīvān* called *Ġhurrat ul-kamāl* (The New Moon of Perfection, 1294), Ḳhusrau said:

/I am a Turk from India,
My response is Hindvī
Egyptian candy I don't have
For doing converse in Arabic./
I have presented to friends a few quires of [my] Hindvī verse too. Here, I consider it sufficient to just mention this, and not give examples, for no delectation is to be had from inserting Hindvī vocables in sophisticated Persian, except when needed [for explaining something.]
/Since I am the Parrot of India
If you ask for the truth
Ask in Hindvī
So that I reply in dulcet tones./

He then proceeded to offer "An Account of the Compilation of Three *Dīvān*s" that emphasized his own uniqueness--"Although Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān does have three *dīvān*s, he has them in Arabic, Persian, and Hindvī" (Ḳhusrau 1975:63-64). How one wishes Ḳhusrau had given some examples, for almost nothing of his Hindvī survives today. But his account does make two things clear: Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān wrote in Hindvī, and so did Ḳhusrau. The reason for the non-survival of Ḳhusrau's Hindvī seems to be that he didn't write much in it, and didn't consider it worth saving. In *Nūh sipihr*, written nearly twenty-five years later, Ḳhusrau claimed some knowledge of Sanskrit, but said nothing about his being a poet in Hindvī (Ḳhusrau 1948:181).

The reason why Ḳhusrau did not think much of his Hindvī efforts is, clearly, the fact that Hindvī still hadn't become a respectable literary language by his time, and he considered it suitable only for light-hearted, for-the-nonce composition. The reason Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān's Hindvī did not survive would seem to be the same: Hindvī's lowly status at that time. We do not know the size of his *dīvān* either; it may have been quite small, and may even have been regarded as an embarrassing oddity by his Persianate admirers. The Ghaznavid sage and poet Ṡanā'ī (1087/91-1145/6), who made a collection of Salmān's poems and presented it to the great man, doesn't seem to say anything about his Hindvī (Lewis 1995:130-37). The odds are that Salmān wrote in Hindvī chiefly to demonstrate his virtuosity--not an uncommon practice in medieval literary culture in the Middle Eastern and the Indo-Muslim milieus. He wrote in Arabic for the same reason.

The first person whose Hindvī survives in substantial quantity, and with whom Urdu literature can seriously be said to begin, is Shaiḳh Bahā ud-Dīn Bājan (1388-1506). His

grandfather came from Delhi, and settled in Ahmedabad. Shaiḳẖ Bājan was born in Ahmedabad, worked in Gujarat, and described his language on different occasions as "Hindī," "Dihlavī," and "Hindvī" (Sherānī 1966:1:166-68; Zaidi 1993:47; Madanī 1981:50, 65-68). Northeners, mainly army men and civil servants, first came to Gujarat in large numbers in 1297, when ʿAlā ud-Dīn Ḳẖaljī (1296-1316) annexed Gujarat after assuming the Sultanate of Delhi. A larger movement toward Gujarat from the North is reported to have taken place around 1398, when Taimūr sacked and occupied Delhi. By Shaiḳẖ Bājan's time, there was a considerable population of Dihlavī-speakers in Gujarat. A major Sufi of that part of the country, Shaiḳẖ Bājan collected some of his Persian and Hindi prose and verse in an anthology that he called *Ḳẖazāʾin-e raḥmatullāh* (Treasures of Divine Mercy and Compassion) after his mentor, Shaiḳẖ Raḥmatullāh. In it, he included Hindī/Hindvī poems in a verse genre called *jikrī* (after the Arabic *żikr*, "remembering"). It was a genre apparently much used in fourteenth-century Delhi, too (Sherānī 1966:1:176). Shaiḳẖ Bājan wrote:

> Poems that have been composed by this *faqīr* are called *jikrī* in the Hindvī tongue, and the singers of Hind [=Northern India] play and sing them upon instruments, observing the discipline of the ragas. Some of these are in the praise of Pīr-e Dastgīr, and of his mausoleum, or in praise of my own native land, that is, Gujarat, and some are disquisitions on my own purposes, and some in the cause of pupils and seekers; some are on the theme of love (Jālibī 1977:1:107).

The Shaiḳẖ here established the parameters of Urdu language and literature for a long time to come: the language is Hindvī, the metres used are both Indic and Persian, the themes of poetry are both sacred and secular. The poetry has a strong popular base and appeal; there is an air of spiritual devotion and Sufi purity about its transactions. Patriotism, or love of native land, is also a notable theme.

 The quality of Shaiḳẖ Bājan's poetry is uneven; the tone is occasionally one of ecstasy, though the general mood is didactic. The following poem occupies a middle space. It celebrates the inaccessibility of God, but there is a hint of desperation too. Success is not certain, failure is a strong probability. Still, there is a certain pride, a sense of distinction, in having such a distant and forbidding beloved:

> /None can walk Your path
> And whoever does
> Exhausts himself, walking, walking.../
> -------
> /The Brahman reads the holy texts,
> And loses wit and wisdom
> Yogis give up deep meditation
> The anchorites practice
> Self-denial, and do
> No good to anyone./
> -------
> /Philosophers
> Forget philosophising
> They bare their head, trying
> To keep the feet covered./
> -------
> /Jains, in Your service

Suffer pain and do
The most arduous penance./

/Look there
A dervish, in a new guise
A shaven fakir; another yet,
Master of the Age, pious
In worship; and here's another,
Become a wanderer
Shouting, ha, hu, ha, hu./

/There's a frenzied one,
Openly so; another wanders
The desert, mad, unknown./

/One, drunk with love,
Raves and yells,
And another falls
Unconscious.
A wanderer, with long and
Matted hair, and black
And dark as night;
Another madman gets the
Shivers, shaves his head
And says only Your name./

/Secretly, yet another
Pronounces Words of power
And domination; and
Here's someone else
Breathing out secret Names
Mad to capture the whole world.
Another there, fasts and keeps
Awake, all night, every night/

/And that one there, becomes
A beggar, asking for
You alone, in alms./

/Thus all groups and all bands,
All weeping and wasting away--
Pieces of chewed sugarcane./

/That's what they see
That's what they find!
So say, oh Bājan

What can you count for?/ (Madanī 1981:66-67; Sherānī 1966:1:169).

The above is a translation of a complete poem, comprising fifteen verses (or thirty lines) of a shortish metre in the original. The metre is Indic, and reasonably regular. Bājan favours Indic metres, but on occasion uses Persian ones too. The poetry is pleasing in its simplicity, but an occasional stunning metaphor (seekers after God end up like chewed sugarcane--with no juice or sweetness of life left in them, and fit only for burning) enlivens the utterance and raises its level substantively. While the poems are mostly spare in the use of words, they pack in a lot of meaning. The language itself seems to possess this characteristic, recalling Edward Terry's observation quoted above that 'Indostan' "speaks much in few words." In fact, at this point the language has not yet acquired anything from the vast rich store of images and metaphorical words and phrases that made Persian poetry (both Indian and Iranian) very nearly unique in the world in possessing a huge ready-to-use vocabulary that sets up resonances of signification the moment anything from that vocabulary is brought into use in a poem.

Like nearly all poetry in the Indian Sufi tradition, Shaikh Bājan's embodies the Islamic worldview as refracted through the prism of Indian eyes. Hindu imagery and conventions abound in the works of early Sufi poets, and sometimes even affect their names. Shaikh Maḥmūd Daryāʾī (1419-1534), another Sufi poet of Gujarat writing in Hindī/Hindvī, occasionally calls himself "Maḥmūd Dās." It is possible that Kabīr (d.1518), and Shaikh ʿAbd ul-Quddūs Gañgohī (1455-1538), called themselves "Kabīr Dās" and "Alakh Dās" respectively for the same reason (Jālibī 1997:1:113).

By the early fifteenth century, Hindvī had become so popular in Gujarat that its vocabulary began to occur in Persian as well. In 1433-34 we have *Bahr ul-faẓāʾil* (Ocean of Graces), a Persian dictionary compiled in Gujarat by Faẓl ud-Dīn Muḥammad bin Qavām bin Rustam Balḵẖī. In addition to the numerous Hindvī glosses of Persian words provided in it *passim*, it had a whole chapter "comprising Hindvī words used in poetry." By the time of Qāẓī Maḥmūd Daryāʾī (1415-1534), and Shaikh ʿAlī Muḥammad Jīv Gāmdhanī (d.1565), the names Hindvī/Dihlavī seem generally to have been given up in favour of Gujrī (Sherānī 1996:1:181).

Yet even much later, "Hindī" as a language name had not disappeared from Gujarat. A masnavi called *Tārīḵẖ-e ḡharībī* (A Rare History), composed in Gujarat between 1751 and 1757, contains the following verses:

/Shoot no barbs at Hindī,
Everybody knows and explains
The Hindī meanings well./

/And look, this Quran, the Book of God, is
Always explained in Hindī;
Whenever it is intended to expound
Its meanings openly, to the people,
One says and explains them
In Hindī/ (Sherānī 1966:2:249).

It must have been in the fifteenth century itself, if not earlier, that literary activity in Hindī/Hindvī became popular in what is now called the Deccan. The first name that we are aware of at present is that of Faḵẖr-e Dīn Niẓāmī, whose masnavi has been tentatively called *Kadam rāʾo padam rāʾo* (c.1421-34) after its two chief characters, because the single extant manuscript of the poem doesn't have a name. It is a poem of great length; the only extant manuscript has 1032 verses (2064 lines)--and is incomplete.

The language of *Kadam rāʾo padam rāʾo* is dense and difficult, perhaps because the poet's heavy preference for Telugu and *tatsam*-Sanskrit vocabulary; though unlike Bājan, who didn't use Persian metre much, Niẓāmī composed his poem in a standard Persian metre, used quite carefully. Niẓāmī is not a better poet than Shaiḳh Bājan, but he tells his story reasonably well:

/Kadam Rāʾo said, Honoured Lady
Come, and listen carefully;
I'd heard it said that women
Do deceive a lot, and I today
Saw something of your tricks;
And ever since I saw those tricks
In real life, I have been
In perplexity. What I knew
By hearsay alone, I saw with
My own eyes. And since then
My eyes have had no peace.
Two serpents I saw, one
A female, high-born, the other
A lowly male, and they together
Were playing lover-like games
Of sex, and lust. As God
Did make me King, so how
Could I see such inequity
Of pairing? I sprang at them
With my rapier drawn
To finish it off then and there.
The female fast slipped away
With her life, leaving her tail behind/ (Niẓāmī 1993:91-93).

Some of my translation above is, inevitably, tentative. But the poem has an easy flow of rhythm, once one develops a knack for reading it aloud.

The Birth of Literary Theory

The most prominent feature of *Kadam rāʾo padam rāʾo* is its secularity: though it has a moral of sorts, it is basically a poem about kingcraft, miscegenation, worldly learning, magic, and mystery. It is also consciously literary. The poet regards the use of double entendre, or punning, as the essence of versifying:

/A poem that doesn't have
Dual-meaning words--
Such a poem does not
Attract anyone at all:
A poem without
Words of two senses/ (Niẓāmī 1973:133).

Ḳhusrau in his Preface to *Ġhurrat ul-kamāl* (1294) described himself as the inventor of a special kind of *īhām* (a highly evolved kind of punning) in poetry (Ḳhusrau 1975:63-64). It should also be noted that Faḳhr-e Dīn Niẓāmī's advent is parallel to, and quite independent of,

Shaikh Bājan's. The first stirrings of literary theory that we see in Niẓāmī's poem suggest that Hindī/Hindvī has now matured as a medium for creative expression. It is significant that the first intimations of theory that we have in Urdu hark back not to Iran or Arabia, but to India, and to a poet who is a major Indian literary theorist.

It might be a good idea to stop here a while and consider Ḳhusrau's literary theory. His ideas seem to have had a quiet but far-reaching influence on Urdu and Indo-Persian literary practice, not always by providing direct guidelines, but by offering general support to literary activity. Niẓāmī's stress on *īhām*, quoted above, should certainly owe something to Ḳhusrau's precept and example.

Ḳhusrau's influence may also be seen in the importance placed on *ravānī* (flowingness) in Indo-Persian and Urdu poetry. While the need for poetry to be easy-flowing and amenable to public recitation must have been felt by the audience and realised by poets from very early times, Ḳhusrau seems to be the first to have written about it in some detail. He created a somewhat complex, and certainly subjective, theory of *ravānī*--subjective enough, in fact, to make us recall that he claimed to know Sanskrit, and may have been familiar with the concept of the *sahríday* reader of poetry.

In the Preface to his *Kulliyāt* (Collected Poems), which he seems to have compiled after 1315, Ḳhusrau discussed and graded his own four *dīvān*s on the basis of *ravānī*. He described the first one as "like the earth: cold, dry, dense, and brittle." His second *dīvān* contained ghazals that were "gentle and soft in the imagination like water, and superior to earth, and purged of the dust of all dense words"; they were "warm, and wet." The third contained "ghazals roasted, and baked, and most desirable....soft, and delicate, and more flowing, and superior." The fourth divan contained "ghazals like fire" that could melt tender hearts, soften steely ones, and destroy loveless ones with their "blazing flame and fiery brilliance" (Ḳhusrau 1967:39-40).

It is not necessary, and probably not possible, to give an exhaustive analysis of the theories, allusions, and wordplay involved here. The basic theme is that Ḳhusrau sees *ravānī* as a quality of the nature of fire and water. The best *ravānī* is that of water-turned-to-heat (=air) turned to water-turned-to-air-turned-to-water. Poetry flows like the rise-and-fall of music--only more freely, because air, water, and fire essentially follow their own bent, while music is bound by time and rhythm. The *ravānī* of poetry transcends the bounds of time and rhythm, merging and transmuting disparate elements.

Ḳhusrau stresses the role of the proper temperament in the appreciation, and also production, of poetry. He begins the discourse of *ravānī* by appealing to people who have the proper temperament or nature. He uses the word *ṭabʿ*, the standard word in Persian/Arabic for the poet's "temperament." The root word in Arabic means "to impress something upon something," as with a seal or signet. Thus a person with the proper temperament would have to have some training, or early imprinting, too. Ḳhusrau uses the term *ṭabʿ-e vaqqād* (the brilliant-fiery-lively-heated-bright, hence intelligent, perceptive temperament) twice--once for the reader, and at another time for himself. Just as the poet has the *ṭabʿ-e vaqqād* to enable him to make poems, the reader should have *ṭabʿ-e vaqqād* to see and know what the poet is doing. The resemblance here to Abhinavagupta's notion of the *sahrídaya* reader who has "a heart with the keen faculty of perception" is obvious (Tewary 1984:33). The idea of the union of fire and water as the essence of *ravānī* leads us to the notion of poetic energy. A poem that does not fully participate in its maker's energy as embodied in his (fiery) creative imagination, would be less

ravān. Fiery poems do things, and have the energy of movement. They cause things to happen, yet their energy is not harnessed to causes social or moral, but to the cause of love.

The prime importance that Ḳhusrau placed on *ravānī* found echoes everywhere in Persian/Urdu poetry, culminating in the assiduous cultivation of it by the Delhi Urdu poets of the early eighteenth century. One of the earliest after Ḳhusrau to place particular value on *ravānī* was Ḥāfiẓ (1325?-98) in a Persian verse of uncertain authenticity but significant fame:

> /As for him whom you call
> "The Master," were you to look
> Truly with care: artificer he is
> But has no flowingness/ (Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī n.d.:135).

Nearer home, Urdu poets in the Deccan, building upon the notion of *ravānī*, took the next step in syntagmatic image-making, and introduced the imagery of the ocean, and of pearls in it. Shaiḳh Aḥmad Gujrātī, in his masnavi *Yūsuf zulaiḳha* ([Prophet] Joseph and Zuleika) (1580-85), praised his own poetry in the following words:

> /Then the shoreless ocean
> Of my heart came into flood
> And the sky bent over
> To rain down pearls/ (Aḥmad Gujrātī 1983:215).

Mulla Vajhī (d.1659?), in his long poem *Quṭb mushtarī* (Quṭb [Shāh] and Mushtarī) (1609-10), builds further upon Shaiḳh Aḥmad's image:

> /My pearls began to gleam so
> That the pearls of the sea
> Turned to water within
> The mother of pearl/ (Vajhī 1991:56).

In 1666, we find Nuṣratī Bījāpūrī (1600-1674) praising his poet-king ʿAlī ʿĀdil Shāh (r.1656-72) in his long poem *ʿAlī nāmah* (Chronicle of ʿAlī):

> /Your mind is limpid, your
> Temperament clear and pure,
> Valuer of speech, subtle
> And sharp, it can cleave
> Even a hair./
> -------
> /Poetry is but a wave
> From the ocean of your heart,
> The army of your thoughts
> Looks down upon the sky/ (Nuṣratī Bījāpūrī 1959:27).

Earlier in the poem, the poet invoked God's benediction:

> /Let my thoughts fly high, like the winds;
> To my temperament, give
> The ocean's perpetual wave and flow/ (Nuṣratī Bījāpūrī 1959:10).

Nuṣratī also spoke in this poem of *maẓmūn* (theme), as opposed to *maʿnī* (meaning), a distinction that seems first to have been made in India, perhaps under the influence of Sanskrit, by the "Indian style" *sabk-i hindī* Persian poets of his time. This distinction later became an important part of the poetics of the Urdu ghazal in eighteenth-century Delhi.

Then we have Valī (1665/67-1707/8), who used the ocean-flow image to double purpose: praise of the *ravānī* of his verse, and also of the beloved's flowing tresses:

/In praise of your tresses
Wave upon wave of truths, and meanings
Comes into flow every night
Like the ocean of my temperament/
/Such is the power
Of the waves of my poetry
That it would be proper for
My temperament to be compared
To an ocean/ (Valī Dakanī 1996:239).

Urdu poets in early-eighteenth-century Delhi made *ravānī* one of the cornerstones of the new poetics that was emerging at that time. I call this poetics "new" in the sense that it sought, consciously or otherwise, to pull together a lot of thinking and feeling about the nature of poetry that had been gathering in the Urdu literary culture over the centuries. Here is just one instance, from Shākir Nājī (1690?-1744); it is delightful in its own right, and also closely echoes Valī's verse:

/The flowingness of my temperament
Is no less, oh Nājī,
Than that of the ocean,
Were someone to write a ghazal
Like this ghazal of mine,
I would become his water carrier/ (Nājī 1989:342).

Perhaps the most powerful single component in the matrix of Muslim literary ideas and practice is the Quran, which is believed to be uncreated, and yet is a miracle of textual creation. Poetry tried to approximate to this miracle. Ḵhusrau said that all knowledge was "in the ocean of the Quran," so that "if anyone said that poetry was not in the Praised and Exalted Book, he denied the Quran" (Ḵhusrau 1975:20). Since the Quran was, again by definition, also the most beautiful text, it was proper to place both the mind and heart of poetry in the Quranic context. This great theoretical leap was made by Ḵhusrau in the *Dībāchah* (Preface) to his third *dīvān*, *Ghurrat ul-kamāl*. He pointed out that the Prophet had said "Undoubtedly wisdom is from poetry," and not "undoubtedly poetry is from wisdom." Thus poetry is superior to wisdom: "a poet can be called a philosopher [*ḥakīm*], but a philosopher cannot be called a poet" (Ḵhusrau 1975:18-19; Jamāl Ḥusain 1993).

Ḵhusrau's brilliance lay not so much in proposing a new theory, as in presenting a fusion of two worlds, and enunciating a new argument in favour of the fusion. The general principle that he implied here--that poetry was a body of knowledge in its own right, that it was concerned with larger issues and not with the statement of "truths" seen from either a personal or an "objective" standpoint--was implied in the literary theory of the Arabs, and was not too far from that of the Indians. For both bodies of theory saw poems as meaningful, but not information-giving, texts. And it is in this context that Ḵhusrau's role in formulating the literary taste of Urdu seems most significant.

It is a measure of the special value placed by the Indo-Muslim poetic culture on meaning-generation that among the "firsts" in poetry of which Ḵhusrau is especially proud is a special kind of pun, and the fact that he relates punning directly to meaning generation. He said in the *Dībāchah*:

Before now, the tongue of the poets, which is the hair-dresser and adorner of poetry, did hair-splitting in *īhām* such that two subtle points resulted. This servant, by his

sharp pen, split the point of the hair of meaning such that seven subtle points were obtained from one hair....In brief, if in times before, the image presented by *īhām* had two faces, and whoever looked was astonished, Ḳhusrau's temperament has devised an *īhām* having more reflectivity than the mirror. For in the mirror, there is only one image, and it cannot show more than one idea. Yet this [*īhām* of mine] is a mirror such that if you place one face before it, seven proper and bright ideas appear.
/Your intrepid falcon, playing
With its own life, would engage
The Sīmurġh in mortal combat
Were you to set, oh massive-headed
Lion, your falcon to hunt/ (Ḳhusrau 1975:56).

Ḳhusrau now proceeds to show that through one change in punctuation, and the polysemy of three words in the text, the above verse generates six meanings. His original claim was seven meanings, so the text at this point must be defective. From the verse as given in the text, however, one can actually generate eight meanings; my translation brings out only one of them.

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While the nature of the language in which literature was being produced in the fifteenth an sixteenth centuries was never in doubt--it was a language of the common people, different from other, pre-existing languages, and didn't have many intellectual pretensions yet-- the name of the language continued to be dual until quite late, in the Deccan too. People must have been going to and fro between the North and the South (which also then included Gujarat), starting with the reign of Muḥammad Tuġhlaq, who in 1327 shifted the headquarters of the Sultanate from Delhi in the North to Daulatabad in the deep south. Although he reversed the decision in 1335, travellers' transactions between the two parts of the country continued, especially because it was the upper elite of Delhi who had been uprooted, and they naturally had large retinues. Not all of their numerous clients, pupils, and camp followers went back to Delhi; some retained their connections in the south, at least for some time. These persons must have described their language as Hindī/Hindvī/Dihlavī, or Gujrī, depending on where they came from.

Yet even native south-India-born speakers of the language are on record as describing their language as Gujrī. Examples can be found in the work of the South-Indian-born Sufi Shāh Burhān ud-Dīn Janam (d.1582?) (Jālibī 1997:1:129). Hindvī poetry had already established a powerful presence in the South by the time of Faḳhr-e Dīn Niẓāmī and Mīrānjī Shams ul-ʿUshshāq (d.1496), the father and mentor of Burhān ud-Dīn Janam. Mīrānjī describes his language as "Hindī." Janam describes his as both "Gujrī" and "Hindī," on different occasions. It is obvious that he is making a point in literary theory: in describing his language as Gujrī/Hindī, Janam is establishing his connections with the Sufi, other-worldly, creative literary modes of the Gujrī poets, rather than with the this-worldly, essentially non-religious though didactic world of literary activity constructed by Niẓāmī and his successors.

The Gujrati Sufi poet Shaiḳh Ḳhūb Muḥammad Chishtī (1539-1614) was the greatest Gujrī poet, and a major poet by any consideration. He wrote his long poem (or long series of short, connected poems) called *Ḳhub tarang* (Beauty-Wave) in 1578. In addition to being one of the greatest poems of the mystic-intellectual tradition, strongly reminiscent of the style of Shaiḳh Muhyi ud-Dīn ibn ʿArabī, *Ḳhūb tarang* is also a poem dotted with spires of brilliant thought about the nature of poetry. Its author was aware of the interpenetrative transactions that were gradually building up a body of Hindī/Gujrī language and literature. Arabia and Iran were not

remote or threatening father-figures, but active contributors, and the end result of these interactions is a distinct, though local, identity. He said in *Ḳhūb tarang*:

> /Like the speech
> Flowing from my mouth:
> Arabia and Iran join in it
> To become one/
>
> -------
>
> /The speech that flows
> From the heart,
> The speech of Arabia and Iran:
> Listen, listen to the speech
> Of Gujarat/ (Ḳhūb Muḥammad Chishtī 1993:247-48).

Ḳhūb Muḥammad Chishtī also wrote *Chhand Chhandāñ*, a verse treatise on Sanskrit and Persian prosody; in it he made an attempt to collate the two systems. The opening verse is:

> /Say *bismillāh*, and name this
> *Chhand chhandan*, a book
> About the *pingal*, and *arūẕ*
> And the *tāl ādhyāyah*/ (Sherānī 1966:1:197-200).

Ḳhūb Muḥammad Chishtī evinces the same interest in the "poetryness" of verse, poetic devices, and poetic grammar, that characterises Ḳhusrau's literary thought; *Chhand chhandan* apparently influenced the poetry and poetics of the Deccani king and poet Muḥammad Qulī Quṭb Shāh (r.1580-1611), the first to put together a complete *dīvān* in Urdu/Hindī/Dakanī (Sherānī 1966:1:199-200). In another work, *Bhāʾo bhed*, the Shaiḳh discusses tropes and figures of speech: he defines each figure in Persian and Gujrī, then illustrates it from his Gujrī poems ('Abd ul-Ḥaq 1968:67-68). Ḳhusrau and Ḳhūb Muḥammad Chishtī thus emerge as the earliest literary ideologues in Urdu. As we shall see, Chishtī seems to have set the trend for literary thought in the century that followed.

Shaiḳh Aḥmad Gujrātī (b. circa 1539) wrote his longish masnavi *Yūsuf zulaiḳhā* around 1580-1585. In it, he spoke extensively about poetry, language, and his own views about how to write poems:

> /Since I had both
> Natural and acquired capacity
> For writing poems, I was long
> In the company of learned men,
> And imbibed some of their colour
> Into my own being./
>
> -------
>
> /I spent many days learning
> Syntax, many I spent
> Internalising its voice, like a balance
> In my own heart; many days
> I spent learning grammar, whose texts
> Quite conquered me. I heard
> Disquisitions on the science of figures too,
> And picked pearls of logic there.
> My teacher taught me religious

Philosophy and mysticism;
I obtained instruction in science,
And the arts, basics of thought
And belief, and juristic texts
Also took many of my days.
I have enjoyed the essence
Of prosody, and rhyme, and worked
Hard, to internalise them. I am
Acquainted with astrology, medicine;
Having become a lover of Juice and Essence,
I have drunk deep of many such./

/So many qualities one must have,
And so much learning, before
One can tell the story of a Prophet./

/Telugu, and Sanskrit, I know well
And have heard poets and pundits;
I have read a lot of Persian,
And studied a bit of Arabic poetry too/ (Aḥmad Gujrātī 1983:234).

  This redoubtable inventory of skills and attainments may not have been typical, but
it certainly described Shaiḵẖ Aḥmad, whose reputation spread well beyond Gujarat early in his
own lifetime. The Shaiḵẖ was invited by King Muḥammad Qulī Quṭb Shāh of Golconda to be
his court poet, where he arrived around 1580-81. Shaiḵẖ Aḥmad's list shows that literature in
Hindvī/Gujrī has now evolved toward greater sophistication: talent must be both honed and
widened by lateral and horizontal additions to learning. It is no longer merely an affair of the
heart, driven by spontaneous impulses, but a serious discipline. Let's now hear what a truly
accomplished poet can do:

/It's not difficult for me to compose
In all the genres of poetry there are.
I can use rare thoughts, and rare modes,
Rare and novel tropes and figures.
My themes, auspicious, bright, would show
The light of the sky on this
Lowly earth./

/As my words fly out high, they see
This whole world as one particle.
They cleave the depth of the netherworld,
The height of the sky, unravelling them
Like the skeins of a thread/ (Aḥmad Gujrātī 1983:235).

The Shaiḵẖ mentions allegory, imagination, metaphor, and subtlety of thought as his special
qualities:

/If I were to write in the mode of metaphor
And simile, I would make a new world,
A world different from this; sometimes

I'd separate life from the living;
Sometimes I'd take away
The life of the Light of life. Sometimes
I'd show up the earth as high
As the sky, and sometimes I would
Spread out the sky like the earth./

/I would depict thoughts, subtle and delicate
Like finely carded cotton.
One could see the soul of an angel,
But not my thoughts./

/I thought, if I could find the poems
Made by K̲husrau or Niz̤āmī,
I should quickly put them
Into Hindvī. So one day a friend
Lent me Jāmī's *Yūsuf zulaik̲hā*,
And I began to do it
In the Hindvī tongue, with strong metre,
And similes, and tropes, and figures.
I should not be Jāmī's slave, but follow him
In some places, and not follow him
In some. I should extract whatever
Poetry Jāmī had, and add some of my own./

/I should bring in fewer
Arabic words in the tale, nor mix
Persian and Arabic overmuch.
I shouldn't elide, or twist words
To fit the metre, nor write
Incoherently/ (Aḥmad Gujrātī 1983:237).

Sanskrit, Telugu, Arabic, Persian, are all grist to the poet's mill, and he is not in awe of, or inclined to privilege, any particular linguistic tradition. He acknowledges K̲husrau and Niz̤āmī and Jāmī, but is quite prepared to improve upon them. His language has a literary and linguistic milieu of its own, with no need to be propped up by foreign importations.

     Poetry, for Shaik̲h Aḥmad, is the business of creating new worlds, reversing the order of things, so as to make them anew. While his general debt to Arabic and Sanskrit poetics is obvious, it is hard to pinpoint exactly where the influence or the debt lies. Rather, there is an air of assimilation, an indirect intimation of connections and continuities. Like K̲husrau in his Preface, Shaik̲h Aḥmad is constructing not so much from the past, as for the benefit of the present and the future. Anticipations of the "Indian style" of Persian poetry can be seen. They are not dominant yet, but are clearly the single most prominent element in the Shaik̲h's poetics. The emphasis on abstract, subtle thought; the centrality of metaphor; the global reach of the imagination; and the value placed on figures of speech--all these are characteristics of the "Indian style."

Shaiḵẖ Aḥmad's concern for the language--avoiding too much Arabic and Persian, not distorting pronunciation to suit the metre, not resorting to elisions or compressions--indicates a maturity and stabilisation of linguistic usage. But this was perhaps more in theory than practice, for Gujrī and Dakanī poets are notoriously free with pronunciation, keeping it firmly subservient to the exigencies of metre, or maybe even to *ad hominem*, topical decisions. Often the same word is pronounced in two or three ways in the same text within a brief space, making metrical reading extremely difficult. Yet the theoretical interest evinced by the Shaiḵẖ in keeping a "standard" pronunciation intact suggests the faint beginnings of what in the late nineteenth century became an obsession with "purity" and "correctness" in language.

Vajhī, writing his masnavi *Quṯb mushtarī* some twenty-five years later (1609-10), shows this concern more strongly:

/One who has no sense of coherence
In speech should have nothing to do
With writing poems. And one should not
Have the greed to say too much, either.
If said well, even one single verse
Will suffice. If you have the art,
Use finesse and subtlety. For
One does not stuff bags full with colour.
The difficult part of the art of poetry
Is to make both word and meaning
Coincide. Use only such words
In your poems as have been used
By none but the masters./

/If you knew the grammar
Of poetry, you would use
Hand-picked words, lofty themes.
Even if there's but one powerful theme,
It enhances the pleasure of the speech./

/If your beloved is beautiful like the sun,
And if you further beautify her face,
It is like Light upon Light. Even if
A woman had a thousand flaws,
She would look good if she knew
The art of self-adornment/ (Vajhī 1991:53-54).

One can see a number of new things happening here. In addition to sharing Shaiḵẖ Aḥmad's interest in words and their correctness in usage, Vajhī is also concerned with the ustad's *parole*. The use of words not used by the ustads is not to be encouraged. He places a special value on beauty of speech for its own sake: a fine theme is doubly valuable if well expressed, but even a poor theme gains substantial beauty if expressed with elan and style. Vajhī also proposes the notion of *sāhityah* (equality of words and meaning), and the idea that poetry is an exercise in words. Vajhī died about 1660, leaving Gujrī/Hindvī/Dakanī able to boast a fully fledged literature in prose and verse. The Gujrī impulse in fact reached its peak with Shaiḵẖ Ḵẖūb Muḥammad Chishtī (1539-1614).

The literary theory that provided meaning and justification to the praxis of the previous two and a half centuries can be said to have been summed up by Ṣanʿatī Bījāpūrī in his masnavi *Qiṣṣah-e benaẕīr* (1644-45). Ṣanʿatī doesn't seem to have added anything substantial of his own to the ongoing construction of the poetics for Hindvī literature, but he did say some interesting things about the language that he used. His remarks have almost a normative force:

/I did not put much of Sanskrit in it.
I kept the poem free
Of verbosity. Dakhanī comes
Easy to one who doesn't have Persian.
For it has the content of Sanskrit, but
With a flavour of ease. Having made it easy
In the Dakhanī, I put into it
Tens and scores of prominent
And elegant devices/ (Jālibī 1977:1:273).

Note that while Vajhī called his language "Hindī," Ṣanʿatī calls it "Dakhanī"--and he sets Dakhanī up in opposition and apposition to Persian, as Khūb Muḥammad Chishtī did for Gujrī. For Ṣanʿatī, poems should have an indigenous air, with neither too much Sanskrit, nor too much Persian. But there is still room for elegant and noticeable devices, and fine artifice. Poetry for Ṣanʿatī is the soul and apogee of all human endeavour. It does not need ratification from outside authority. Nor does the poetics genuflect before the ancients, Sanskrit or Perso-Arabic. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about early Urdu literary theory is its air of independence. This tradition of independent thought continued in the South until its last great classical writer, Maulānā Bāqar Āgāh (1746-1808).

Gaps, and a True Beginning, in the North

Literary activity in Gujrī/Hindī continued to flourish. We have seen the author of *Tārīkh-e gharībī* (1751-57) in Gujarat, justifying the use of Hindī in strong terms. By this time, ʿAbd ul-Valī ʿUzlat (1692/93-1775) had made his powerful mark, traveling from his birthplace in Surat to Delhi, and then to the Deccan proper, adorning literary and intellectual gatherings all over the place. His poetry provided continuities with that of Valī, and became an important learning source for the writers who followed. The preface that he appended to his *Dīvān* (1758-59) is the first Urdu prose of its kind.

Prose of many kinds seems to have made hesitant beginnings at about this time in the North. The earliest known work is Faẕlī's *Karbal kathā* (Story of Karbala) (c.1732), a translation of a Persian religious narrative. Then there are two *dāstān*s: *Nau ṭarz-e muraṣṣaʿ* (A New Ornamented Style) (1775) by ʿAtā Ḥusain Taḥsīn, and *Qiṣṣah-e mahr afroz o dilbar* (The Story of Mahr Afroz and Dilbar, c.1731-55) by ʿĪsavī Khān Bahādur. The names of Harīhar Parshād Sambhalī@@ (fl.1730's), and Bindrāban Mathravī (d.1757) and of a prose work by each of the two, also appear. Nothing else is known of them. Saudā (1706?-1781) wrote an Urdu prose preface for his *Kulliyāt*.

By the time of ʿUzlat's death in 1775, the Delhi idiom had become dominant in most of the Urdu world, and a separate Gujrī tradition can be said to have ceased to exist by the end of the eighteenth century. ʿUzlat described his language as Hindī (Jālibī 1984:2:1006-07). This, coupled with the example of *Tārīkh-e gharībī*, would suggest that "Gujrī" as a language name had fallen into disuse by about the 1760's.

The reasons for the gap in the North from Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān (1046-1121) to Khusrau (1253-1325), and then the second age of silence, broken only in Gujarat in the early fifteenth century, can now be summarized as follows: Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān's and Khusrau's efforts were casual, and not in accordance with any established mode of writing. The fact that there was literary activity in Avadhī in the fourteenth century (we have Mullā Dāʾūd's poem *Chandāʾin* in 1379), but not in Urdu, shows that Urdu didn't have a literary status at that time. Urdu did not attain the status of a literary language until the Sufis took it up in Gujarat in the fifteenth century, closely followed by the Dakanīs. No Sufi seems to have made Hindī/Hindvī a vehicle for his literary expression in the North before Shaikh ʿAbd ul-Quddūs Gañgohī (1455-1538) and Kabīr (d.1518); neither, however, wrote in the mainline *kharī bolī* Hindī/Hindvī that we know as Urdu today. The reason for the Sufis' not adopting this language in the early centuries seems to have been the universal popularity and general understandability of Persian in the North, obviating the need for the Sufis to use Hindī/Hindvī for their popular discourse.

The earliest literary text in Hindī/Hindvī extant in the North is Muḥammad Afẓal's 325-verse masnavi *Bikaṭ kahānī* (Story of Misery) (1625). Also known as Afẓal Gopāl, Muḥammad Afẓal was not a Sufi in the strict sense, but he seems to have been the kind of lover that Sufis are believed to be. The actual poem may be earlier, but the only datum we have about the poet is 1625, the year of his death, though it is generally assumed that he completed the poem not long before his death. *Bikaṭ kahānī* is a major work and needs to be examined separately. That it is not strictly a religious poem is not the least interesting thing about it.

The later seventeenth century did see some literary activity in the North, though of generally indifferent quality, most of it folk-religious in character, and almost all of it in the century's last quarter. Raushan ʿAlī wrote his long *Jang nāmah* (Chronicle of Battle), also called *ʿĀshūr nāmah* (Chronicle of Ten Days), in verse, in 1688-89; Ismāʿīl Amrohvī wrote his masnavi called *Vafāt nāmah-e bībī fātimah* (Chronicle of the Death of Bībī Fātimah) in 1693-94. Both are poems of folk-religious character. The former is closely modelled on Miskīn's *Jang nāmah-e muḥammad ḥanīf* (Chronicle of the Battle of Muḥammad Ḥanīf) (1681) in Gujrī (Madanī 1990:15, 25-26). Raushan ʿAlī's poem comes so close on the heels of Miskīn's poem, as to suggest direct influence. If this is so, it would mean that literary contact of a fairly immediate kind existed between the South and the North in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Miskīn describes his language as Gujrī (Madanī 1990:25), while Raushan ʿAlī describes his as Hindī/Hindustānī/Hindvī, on different occasions (Jālibī 1984:2:47). The fact that Raushan ʿAlī, although a close follower of Miskīn, still calls his language by a different name, would suggest that he considered his tradition different and separate from Gujrī.

Apart from these folk-religious poems of the last quarter of the seventeenth century-- and one other manuscript of folk-religious poems that cannot be dated with certainty (Adīb 1984:17-18, 25)--there is nothing between Afẓal and Jaʿfar Zaṭallī (1659?-1713), the first truly full-time Urdu writer in the North. The whole of the seventeenth century is spanned between Afẓal and Jaʿfar, but neither's work offers any clues or hints about the great efflorescence that was to take place in Delhi early in the new century, and which was to go on undiminished, through war and strife, civil commotion, political disintegration, and foreign sway, for a hundred and fifty years.

In the early centuries of Hindī/Hindvī, there seems to have been an osmosis of Hindī/Hindvī into Persian on a scale that has not yet been fully appreciated. Persian's second oldest dictionary, and the first to be prepared in India, was *Farhang-e qavvās*, compiled by Fakhr ud-Dīn Qavvās Ghaznavī in ʿAlā ud-Dīn Khaljī's time (1296-1316). It was followed by two

other extant dictionaries in the fourteenth century, and three in the fifteenth century. All these dictionaries have one thing in common: they enter many Hindī/Hindvī words as lexical or glossal items. Persian dictionaries of great depth and range continued to be produced in India until well into the nineteenth century; most if not all of them were designed for an Indian readership, and they generally expected a high degree of sophistication from their users, especially from the sixteenth century onwards. It is thus not surprising that Persian-Urdu or Urdu-Persian glossaries were an important early linguistic activity in Hindī/Hindvī in the North. Thus Ḥakīm Yūsufī (fl.1490-1530) wrote a "long poem" [qaṣīdah] "about Hindī words" that glosses a number of Hindī/Hindvī verbs and nouns into Persian; in 1551, Ajay Chand Bhaṭnagar compiled a fuller verse glossary.

The point would therefore make itself that in the North, up to the seventeenth century, most people who were potential producers and consumers of Hindī/Hindvī literature, or who would follow the discourses of the Sufis and other holy people, knew enough Persian not to need a local language for instruction and delectation. Persian, it would seem, *was* a local language for most if not all of them. This would also account for the emergence of Reḵhtah-- first as a genre, then as the name of the language in which the Reḵhtah text was composed, and then as any poem composed in Reḵhtah.
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"Reḵhtah," as we know, means, among other things, "mixed," and "the mixture of lime and mortar used for building activity." Thus *reḵhtah* became the name for a poem in which either Hindī/Hindvī was added to a Persian template, or Persian was added to a Hindī/Hindvī template. The earliest Urdu poetry in the North, including even such a sophisticated poem as *Bikaṭ kahānī*, reveals the Reḵhtah mode in action. *Bikaṭ kahānī* has 325 verses; of these, forty-one are directly in Persian; twenty have one line of Urdu and one of Persian; and in another twenty, half of one line is Persian, the other half being Urdu. Even more complex combinations are possible: for example, in verse fourteen, line one, the first the first four words are Persian, the rest Urdu, while line two is in Urdu; in verse fifteen, the first line is Persian except for one Urdu word, artificially Persianised, and the second line is Urdu except that the penultimate word is Persian (though assimilable in Urdu) (Sherānī 1966:2:104-05).

The Persian-based popularity of *reḵhtah* in the North seems to have retarded the growth of Hindī/Hindvī literature. Though not unknown in the South, *reḵhtah* never had much of a presence there. The Persianization of the North may have been because of snobbery, or because of the immense prestige in that part of the country of "Indian style" Persian poets. Evidence of the tilt in Persian's favour can be seen in the distinction between *reḵhtah* and "ghazal" that was long made in the North. As we have seen, the former was used to denote a poem in a mixture of Persian and Urdu; later, the term came to be used for the language too. But the important distinction was that *reḵhtah*, whether in mixed language or plain Hindī/Hindvī, was in early decades not considered ghazal, even if it was in the ghazal form. The term "ghazal" was reserved for the Persian ghazal alone. Consider the following verse of Qāʾim Chāndpūrī (1722/25-95):

/Qāʾim, it was I
Who gave *reḵhtah* the manner
Of a ghazal. Otherwise
It was but a feeble thing
In the language of the Deccan/ (Qāʾim Chāndpūrī 1965:1:215).

No one seems to have asked what Qāʾim meant by giving *reḳhtah* "the manner of the ghazal." Surely there was a lot of ghazal in both Dakanī and North Indian Hindī/Hindvī before Qāʾim Chāndpūrī? He had his own ustads, Saudā (1706/-1781) and Dard (1720-85), right there when he wrote this verse, probably before 1760. It should be obvious that he meant Persian when he said "ghazal," even if his boast would have been seen as bad taste by his ustads (since it belittled their own achievement).

The issue is settled beyond doubt by Muṣḥafī. In his eighth *dīvān*, which would have been compiled around 1820-24, we have the verse:

/Muṣḥafī, my *reḳhtah* is
Better than ghazal--
For what purpose should
One now be
A devotee
Of Ḳhusrau, and Saʿdī?/ (Muṣḥafī 1990:52)

While Delhi claims, almost imperialistically, to be the pristine seat of Urdu literature, and this claim colours and affects the literary culture of Urdu in many ways, the fact remains that Delhi began with a bias against Dakanī/Hindvī, and patronised the hybrid genre *reḳhtah* for a long time, and even named the language Reḳhtah (which also means "poured, scattered, dropped") as if by way of reminder of its lowly origins. Considering this bias, it is not surprising that there is very little Urdu literature in and around Delhi before 1700. The surprising thing is that there is still so much.

In its effort to cancel or nullify its Dakanī/Gujrī-linked past, or as a defence mechanism, Delhi's literary culture developed an arrogance and consequent indifference toward non-Delhi kinds of literature. It was an attitude that survived well into the twentieth century. Even Delhi literature, if it didn't conform to "ghazal" standards, was not accommodated in the contemporary or historical canon. Poets like Afẓal and Jaʿfar Zaṭallī suffered neglect, and even contempt, at Delhi's hands. Very few tazkirahs mention these two poets. To this day, the former remains practically unknown in academia, and the latter is mentioned, if at all, with an air of disapproval and disgust.

Yet both Afẓal and Zaṭallī are major poets. Afẓal is also the pioneer of the *bārah māsah* genre (a kind of "shepherd's calendar") in Urdu. Afẓal's poetry is recognised, though very briefly, by Mīr Ḥasan, who wrote in his tazkirah, completed about 1774-78: that *Bikaṭ kahānī* had been composed "about his own state" and had "half Persian and half Hindī, but popularity is a gift of God" (Mīr Ḥasan 1921:41). Mīr Ḥasan's observations have a hint of disapproval, because Afẓal wrote in the classic *reḳhtah* mode, which had fallen into disuse (and in fact disrepute) by that time. Mīr Ḥasan's remarks may have actually put potential readers off *Bikaṭ kahānī*. And the poem is not autobiographical, as Mīr Ḥasan assumed. It is a first-person narrative told by a lovelorn woman. The poem abounds with lively, colourful imagery, and has the easy flow and controlled passion characteristic of major love poetry.

Jaʿfar Zaṭallī was perhaps the greatest Urdu satirist, and that is saying a great deal, considering that Urdu is particularly rich in satire and humour of all kinds. But Zaṭallī is more than a satirist: he is a lover of words, and of bawdiness and porn (both soft and hard)--which he uses as a weapon of satire, and also as a means of expressing his spirits, high or low. He is a master of variety and technique, and a profound student of life and politics.

Moreover, both Afẓal and Zaṭallī are important linguistically because they use a language which is fledging itself out of its somewhat tawdry *reḳhtah* form, and is on its way to

emerging as the nearly perfect medium that it did become within about four decades of Zaṭallī's death. Zaṭallī's vocabulary is larger--and, naturally, much more varied--than that of Afẓal. His career marks the major watershed in the history of Urdu literature, and not only in the North. The skills developed over the previous two centuries and more may not all have been available to Zaṭallī; and in any case, there was little by way of humour or satire in Gujrī and Dakanī. Zaṭallī must have learnt from his great Persian predecessors, especially Fauqī Yazadī, an Iranian who spent some time in India during Akbar's reign (1556-1605). Fauqī and Zaṭallī share, among other things, a proclivity for pornography for the sake of fun as much as for the sake of satire and lampoon.

Compared to Gujrī and Dakanī, the language of both Afẓal and Zaṭallī sounds less outlandish to modern northern ears. The reason is that it has very little *tatsam*-Sanskrit, Telugu, Marathi, or Gujrati in its vocabulary. The Persian component of their language--the effect of *reḵhtah* or of direct natural absorption, or both--is familiar enough; so is the Braj and Avadhi component. A good bit of their vocabulary, which was retained by Delhi writers over much of the eighteenth century, has been lost to mainline (Delhi-Lucknow) Urdu, but it survives in the Urdu spoken in Eastern India, and is also comprehensible to Urdu speakers in the South today. This suggests that except for the strong southern content, the register of "Hindī" and "Dakanī" was much the same in the seventeenth century. The language of Delhi changed substantially during 1760-1810, while that of the East and the South remained comparatively immune to change. The parochialism, and the chauvinistic belief in the superiority of their own idiom and usage, which became the hallmark of the speakers of the Delhi register of Hindī/Reḵhtah in later years, is nowhere in evidence before the 1750's. In fact, if there was an upper register at that time, it must have been located in the South.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the "Indian style" was the order of the day everywhere in Iran, Turkey, and Indo-Muslim India. The influence of Sanskrit and Braj and Avadhi on Indo-Muslim literary thought had begun more than a century earlier, and had assumed a distinct and strong presence during Akbar's reign. By the 1640's, we have Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha in Dārā Shikoh's and Shāhjahān's courts. Jagannātha's own poetry in Sanskrit is clearly imbued with Persian influences, and most poetry of the Indian style in Persian should find responsive echoes in Sanskrit-trained ears (Pollock, REF.).

If the prestige and popularity of Persian retarded the growth of Hindī/Reḵhtah literature in the North, the influence and power of the Indian-style Persian poetry nevertheless had salubrious effects on Reḵhtah/Hindī poetry and theory when Reḵhtah/Hindī came into its own in Delhi in the late 1600's. Shāh Mubārak Ābrū (1683/5-1733) is the first major poet in Delhi in the new century. He must have begun writing poetry late in the seventeenth century, and is generally regarded as having adopted *īhām* extremely early in his career. We have seen Ḵhusrau claiming to be the inventor of a highly elaborate kind of *īhām* in poetry. But the immediate influence on Ābrū seems to have been Sanskrit through Braj Bhāshā--Ābrū came from Gwalior, an important Braj area--and Indian-style Persian poetry. Even Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād, who blamed Urdu poetry for being too Iran-oriented, acknowledged that *īhām* must have come into Urdu poetry from the Sanskrit (Āzād 1967:99).

Ābrū, and indeed whoever entered upon the business of poetry in Dakanī/Hindī/Reḵhtah in the early eighteenth century, came under the influence of Valī, and in many ways Valī has been the poet of all Urdu poets since the first decade of the eighteenth century.

A Man Called Valī

According to an estimate in 1966, there were extant at that time sixty-five dated manuscripts, and fifty-three undated manuscripts, of Valī's *dīvān* in libraries and similar collections; he also appears in numerous anthologies. Nūr ul-Ḥasan Hāshmī, the leading Valī expert of our time, says that these numbers, though huge by ordinary standards, are still less than the actual corpus of Valī's extant manuscripts, which should run to over two hundred (Valī 1996:13-14).

Valī was born around 1665/7 and he died most probably in 1707-08. However, dates as disparate as 1720-25, and even 1735, have been proposed as the actual time of his death. In fact, determining a late date for Valī's death is a political, rather than scholarly, issue. For one of the most famous stories about Valī is that he was advised by Shāh Gulshan, a saint and poet who lived in Delhi, to adopt the style and the themes of the Persians. Thus the longer Valī lived after Shāh Gulshan's putative advice to him to follow the Persians and give up Dakanī ways, the greater the chance of his poetry's being proved to be Persian/Delhi-inspired, thus reducing by that much Valī's status as an original poet who influenced the poets of Delhi (Jālibī 1997:1:534-39; ʿIṣmat Jāved 1992:337-54). The year 1707-08 seems to be the most likely as Valī's year of death, because the oldest extant manuscript of his *dīvān* is dated 26 Rabīʿ ul-Avval, 1120 *hijrī*, which corresponds to July 15, 1708. This manuscript contains all the poetry that we at present know to be Valī's; it stands to reason therefore, especially in view of his great fame, that he wasn't around for much longer after that date to compose poetry.

Valī's popularity should obviously be attributable to the quality and the influence of his poetry. For he was not a Sufi or religious leader whose works and words would have been lovingly and carefully preserved by his followers. Judging from the number of male (and maybe female) friends and lovers that he celebrates in his *dīvān*, he must have been a man of the world, and of his time--a time when expression of physical love in poetry was much less inhibited than became the rule from about the mid-nineteenth century in the Urdu culture. Valī was a poet, a man of learning, a man of the world; he was from Gujarat, or Aurangabad, or both. He revolutionised Urdu poetry. Standard Urdu literary historiography and thought have tried their best, over the last two and a half centuries, to diminish the achievement of Valī--for he was an outsider, and a Dakanī to boot, and it must have been gall and wormwood to the "Mirzās" and the ustads of Delhi to have to acknowledge the primacy, and the leadership, of such a person.

Many even of the earliest of Delhi poets, who most felt the positive impact of Valī, were deeply ambivalent about him, and acknowledged their debt to him in equivocal language:
/Ābrū, your poetry is
Like a Prophet's miracle,
And Valī's, like the miracle
Of a mere saint/ (Ābrū 1990:271).

/Valī is Master in Reḳhtah,
So who can write
An answer to him?
Yet to write with
Diligent care and search
Gives success, given
A little inspiration/ (Ābrū 1990:295).

/Were someone to go and recite
Nājī's verse on Valī's grave,
Valī would rip open his own shroud
And spring from his resting place
Crying, "Well said!"/ (Nājī 1989:349).

/Ḥātim is not all that insufficient
To give peace to my heart,
Yet Valī is the true Prince
Of poetry in this world/ (Shāh Ḥātim 1991:58).

Shāh Ḥātim in fact said of himself, "In Persian poetry, [Ḥātim] is a follower of Ṣāʾib, and in Reḵhtah, considers Valī the ustad" (Shāh Ḥātim 1975:39). We thus see that Shah Ḥātim, most generous of poets, is the only one whose tribute to Valī is not left-handed.

The later masters, particularly Mīr (1722-1810) and Qāʾim Chāndpūrī (1724/25-1794), took the lead in belittling the achievement of Valī by introducing the story of Saʿdullāh Gulshan's advising Valī. In sum, the story is as follows: First, Valī came to Delhi in 1700--as we know from Qāʾim--and met Gulshan, who looked at his poetry advised him to "appropriate" themes and images from the Persians, and thus enrich his own poetry (Mīr 1972:91). Second, Valī apparently took the advice seriously and implemented it successfully. Third, when his *dīvān* arrived in Delhi in the second regnal year of Emperor Muḥammad Shāh (1720-21), it took Delhi by storm, and everybody, young or old, adopted Valī's style of poetry (Muṣḥafī 1933:80).

One is bound to wonder why Shāh Gulshan would have waited for somebody, or even Valī himself, to come from outside Delhi in order to become the recipient of his somewhat unethical advice. Delhi at that time--in fact, at any time--was home to numerous poets. Most of them wrote Persian, and also tried their hand at a bit of Reḵhtah. They were perfectly fluent in Persian, and knew Persian poetry as well as Shāh Gulshan did. And if there were more suitable recipients for such advice, there were also more suitable advisors. Among the major Persian poets in Delhi at the end of the seventeenth century, Mirzā ʿAbd ul-Qādir Bedil (1644-1720) and Muḥammad Afẓal Sarḵhush (1640-1714) commanded greater respect and a larger following than anyone else. Bedil was in fact at the apogee of his illustrious career during the 1700's, and even wrote a bit of Reḵhtah himself. Gulshan himself was Bedil's follower, or perhaps even pupil, in Persian poetry.

To be sure, Valī must have called on Shāh Gulshan, if the latter was in Delhi at the time Valī came there. Gulshan came from Burhanpur, Gujarat, and came at least once to Ahmedabad, where Valī may have met him. There is a small Persian prose tract composed by someone called Valī who describes himself as a pupil of Gulshan (Valī 1996:40-41). According to Madanī, the master-pupil connection between Valī and Gulshan would have been for Persian, and would have first occurred at Ahmedabad, or Burhanpur (Madanī 1981:86-87). On balance, the likelihood of Valī having known Gulshan from before his visit to Delhi in 1700 is strong enough to cast serious doubt on the stories narrated by Mīr and Qāʾim about Valī and Gulshan.

I say "stories" because the details of Qāʾim's version are very different from Mīr's. Qāʾim completed his tazkirah in 1754. He is reputed to have been at the task earlier than Mīr. Nevertheless, neither Mīr nor Qāʾim was even born when Valī came to Delhi, so neither had any more personal knowledge than the other. Qāʾim tells an even more curious tale. Recognising that a poet who had attained the mature (by the reckoning of the time) age of thirty-three or

thirty-five--Valī was born around 1665-67--wasn't a very likely candidate for the patronising, somewhat avuncular advice putatively (and gratuitously) tendered by a comparative stranger, Qāʾim stipulated that Valī wasn't a poet at all before that momentous meeting with Gulshan. Qāʾim says:

> [Valī] used occasionally to compose a couple or so of Persian *shiʿr*s in praise of the beauty of [a young Sayyid called Mīr Abuʾl-Maʿālī]. On arrival here [in Delhi], when he gained entrance to the presence of Ḥaẓrat Shaiḵẖ Saʿdullāh Gulshan, the latter commanded him to compose poetry in Reḵẖtah, and by way of education, gave away to him the following opening verse that he composed [there and then]:
> /Were I to set down on paper
> The praises of the beloved's
> Miraculous beauty, I would
> Spontaneously convert the paper
> Into the White Hand of Moses/.[5]
> In short, it was due to the inspiration of the Ḥaẓrat's tongue that Valī's poetry became so well-loved that each and every verse in his *dīvān* is brighter than the horizon of sunrise, and he wrote Reḵẖtah with such expressive power and grace that many ustads even of that time began to compose in Reḵẖtah (Qāʾim 1968:105).

This tale could seem a little more plausible than Mīr's, but for the fact that we know Valī to have already been a substantial poet when he visited Delhi in 1700-01. While it is impossible to date all his poetry accurately, references to contemporaries who died before 1700 clearly establish the fact of his having been a serious Reḵẖtah/Hindī poet before 1700. There is, for example, the following agonistic reference to the famous Indo-Persian poet Nāṣir ʿAlī, who died in 1696:

> /Were I to send this line
> To Nāṣir ʿAlī, he would upon
> Hearing it, spring up excited
> Like a streak of lightning/ (Valī 1996:196).

Other knowledgeable tazkirah-writers do not support the story of Shāh Gulshan's advice (Shafīq 1968:82-84; Mīr Ḥasan 1921:204); one in fact explicitly rejects it, sneering, "Let the truth or falsehood of this statement be on the original narrator's head" (Amrullāh Ilāhābādī 1968:123).

It is extremely unlikely that Valī's poetry owes anything to Shāh Gulshan's instruction or example. Apart from the Dakanī tradition and language in his blood, and the part Gujrī played in his nurture, he had Ḥasan Shauqī (d.1633?) as his exemplar. Shauqī was in Ahmadnagar (then in Golconda) but his reputation seems to have been widespread. The main characteristics of Shauqī's poetry are a richness of sensuous imagery, and a language comparatively free of hard Telugu and *tatsam*-Sanskrit influences. The extreme case of such influences was Faḵẖr-e Dīn Niẓāmī; a more moderate, but still fairly heavy, case was Nuṣratī, perhaps the greatest Dakanī poet. Valī's language had a greater tilt toward the Persian-mixed Reḵẖtah of Delhi. Most of the "Dakanī" component of Valī's language is *tadbhav*, and a good bit of it is to found in Delhi's register as well.

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[5]It is a beautiful verse, but unfortunately impossible to render satisfactorily in English. The "White Hand of Moses" refers to a miracle granted to Moses by God at Sinai. He was asked to put his right hand under his collar. It came out entirely white, "without stain, or evil" (Quran 27:12).

It appears that a strain of Dakanī/Hindvī developed in and around Aurangabad after Aurangzeb and his vast armies established a presence there. This happened even before he took the throne at Delhi. His campaigns in the Deccan continued through his long reign (1658-1707). ʿAbd us-Sattār Ṣiddīqī, perhaps the greatest modern comparative linguist in Urdu, says:

> It seems clear that by the end of the tenth century *hijrī* [1590/1], there were two forms of the Hindustani language in the Deccan. One, which was current in Dravidian[-dominated] areas of the Deccan, outside the territory of Daulatabad, and found few opportunities to renew its connections with the language of Delhi....The other form of the language was that which was prevalent in Daulatabad and its surrounds. The Mughals turned towards the Deccan in the beginning of the eleventh *hijrī* century [end of the 1590's], and their influence grew fast. They also made Daulatabad their headquarters, and Aurangzeb too established the city of Aurangabad just a few miles from there. People from Delhi came to Aurangabad in very large numbers in the times of Shāhjahān and Aurangzeb, and brought Delhi's high Urdu with them. It renewed and refurbished the language of the territory of Daulatabad, and the Aurangabadis happily adopted the new language of Delhi. And that is the language that we find in Valī; and but for some minor differences, it was the language spoken in Delhi in Valī's time (Valī 1996:61-62).

ʿAbd us-Sattār Ṣiddīqī may have simplified the case a bit, but his broad picture is accurate. Shafīq Aurangābādī writes about Nuṣratī that his poems come "heavy on the tongue because of their being in the mode of the Dakanīs" (Shafīq 1968:80). Maulvi ʿAbd ul-Ḥaq, who spent a substantial part of his life in Aurangabad, says that in the first half of the eighteenth century, the language registers of Delhi and Aurangabad were practically indistiguishable. Once the Deccan became more or less independent of Delhi in the 1750's, the language of the Daulatabad-Aurangabad area lost touch with Delhi, and gradually tilted back to the main Dakanī mode (Tamannā 1936:*ze*).

Ḥasan Shauqī's poetry is comparatively gentler on the Aurangabadi ear. Ḥasan Shauqī is the only Dakanī/Hindī/Reḵhtah poet whom Valī mentions as a rival, or worthy of comparison with himself:

> /It's quite proper, oh Valī
> If Ḥasan Shauqī should come
> Back from the dead, eager
> For my poems/ (Valī 1996:243)

All the others whom Valī ever mentions as equals or inferiors--and he names quite a few--are Persian poets. In a remarkable ghazal, he fits the names of numerous Persian poets in a series, using them, through wordplay, as words of praise for the beloved. Apart from Shauqī, the only Dakanī/Hindī/Reḵhtah poet whose name he brings in is Shāh Gulshan, and he can be described as a Hindī/Reḵhtah poet only by courtesy (Valī 1996:292).

So what did Valī do? He showed that Reḵhtah/Hindī was capable of great poetry, just as Gujrī/Hindī and Dakanī/Hindī were. Valī also showed that Reḵhtah/Hindī could rival, if not surpass, Indo-Persian poetry in sophistication of imagery, complexity and abstractness of metaphor, and "theme-creation" [*maẓmūn āfirīnī*]. Historically, perhaps his most important contribution was to infuse among Reḵhtah poets the sense of a new poetics--a poetics that owed as much to the Indian-style Persian poetry, and through it to Sanskrit too, as it did to his Dakanī predecessors:

> /Oh Valī, the tongue of the master poet

Is the candle that lights up
The assembly of meanings/ (Valī 1996:286).

/The Beloved has made her place
In Valī's heart and soul
Like meaning in the word/ (Valī 1996:203).

/The way for new themes
Is not closed;
Doors of poetry
Are open forever/

/The beloved
Whose Name is Meaning reveals
Herself, bright, when the tongue
Removes the curtain from
The face of Poetry/

/Poetry is
Unique in the world, there is
No answer to poetry/ (Valī 1996:177).

The New Literary Culture

By the early eighteenth century, many Indians--especially in the North, but also in the Aurangabad area--regarded themselves as having a native speaker's competence in Persian; I have given some details of the confident eighteenth-century Indian Persian literary culture in a recent article (Faruqi 1998). Most of the earliest Reḳhtah writers in Delhi were Persian poets who wrote in Reḳhtah only on the side. That this was the case until much later in Aurangabad too is evidenced by Shafīq Aurangābādī's saying in his tazkirah that he began writing poetry in Persian by the age of twelve (he was born in 1745), had no taste for Reḳhtah, and in fact looked down upon it. When Reḳhtah poetry became extremely popular among his friends, he too turned to it, but not without considerable mental conflict and anguish (Shafīq 1968:9).

The new wave of Reḳhtah/Hindī writers who began to arrive on the scene in the early 1700's, and whose poetry received a much-needed fillip from the example of Valī, wrote more Reḳhtah than Persian. Yet Persian did not become the mere second string to the Delhi poet's bow until much later. There was not much "high" literary activity in Reḳhtah before the impact of Valī was felt in Delhi. As we saw above, until quite late in Delhi's literay culture "ghazal" meant only "Persian ghazal." Young writers who were turning to Reḳhtah at the turn of the century in Delhi were perhaps more comfortable in Persian than in Reḳhtah. Thus, when poets began composing in Reḳhtah in large numbers, they needed guides or mentors to put them through their paces, whence was born the institution of "ustad" [ustād] (master, mentor), and "shagird" [shāgird] (pupil, disciple) which is unique to Urdu literary culture, and which did not exist in even Dakanī or Gujrī.

Once established, the custom of forming ustad-shagird relationships took root and spread fast. What had begun as a need soon became a fashion, and then a minor industry and

source of patronage. Loyalties were generated and abrogated; feuds began to occur between ustads, or between shagirds of the same ustad. Poetic genealogy became an important part of a poet's literary status. (Examples still occur: a poet from Maharashtra recently claimed to trace his poetic lineage back to Saudā (d.1781) and Dard (d.1785) (Ibrāhīm Ashk 1996:4).) Codes of conduct and protocols of behaviour were developed.

These protocols were mostly in place by the 1760's, and soon spread to all Reḵhtah/Hindī centres--Lucknow, Banaras, Allahabad, Murshidabad, Patna, Aurangabad, Hyderabad, Surat, Rampur, Madras, and so on. In the beginning it certainly met a felt need: a literary community was giving up a foreign language in which it was comfortable, in favour of the local language whose literary codes were seen as more or less independent, and therefore in need of being specially learnt. (The institution's full literary and cultural dimensions have been examined by Frances Pritchett in her chapter included in the present volume.)

The mushairah [*mushāʿirah*] had been in existence in India since the sixteenth century, but had been confined to Persian recitation alone. The new literary community of the North, gaining confidence gradually, instituted mushairahs in Reḵhtah as well. It was common until the nineteen twenties, if not even later, for Persian poetry to be recited at Urdu mushairahs without the audience or the poet feeling any incongruity. Until the nineteen fifties and even later, individual Urdu poets' collections (including mine) often contained a bit of Persian poetry too (Fārūqī 1997a).

By the mid-eighteenth century the Hindus too, who had also been concentrating on Persian, began to adopt Reḵhtah. The major ones in the beginning, like Sarb Sukh Dīvānā (1727/8-1788/9), were bilingual in Urdu and Persian; Dīvānā established a long and illustrious line of shagirds through his own shagirds, especially Jaʿfar ʿAlī Ḥasrat (d.1791/2). By the end of the century, Hindus were active participants in the Urdu creative scene, a situation that, happily, continues to obtain till this day, in spite of politically motivated efforts to alter it.

Urdu became nominally the language of power in 1772, when Shāh ʿĀlam II took up residence at the Red Fort in Delhi. Since Shāh ʿĀlam II himself had little political power, especially after his deposition and blinding by Ġhulām Qādir and restoration by the Marathas (1788), Urdu cannot be said to have been a sharer in the real power culture of those times. In the south and east, and in the Maratha administration too, Persian held sway for a long time. It was finally dislodged by the British in 1837. They introduced Bengali in Bengal, Oriya in Orissa, and "Hindustani" in the Persian script over the extensive Northern Indian areas under their control (Dalmia 1997:175-77). This amounted to a patronage and promotion of Urdu, of sorts, but the power elite continued to use Persian and English, and later English alone; manifestations of power and pelf were invariably couched in one or both of these languages.

Still, there was another, and quite real, sense in which Urdu had power. Reḵhtah/Hindī poets had self-confidence enough to sneer at non-Delhi Reḵhtah speakers, and even at Persian. A knowledge and practice of Urdu was a desirable quality from the 1750's onward not only in Delhi, but also in Patna, Murshidabad, Lucknow, Farrukhabad, Hyderabad, Aurangabad, Vellore (Rāhī Fidāʾī 1997), and numerous other cities of the Empire which were now under the power of semi-independent, but mostly Delhi-appointed, satraps whose cultural base was Delhi.

Reḵhtah/Hindī in fact became a central reality of elite existence over much of the subcontinent before the eighteenth century was out, as can be seen from the fifteen or more tazkirahs of Reḵhtah/Hindī poets, and of Persian poets many of whom wrote Reḵhtah/Hindī, composed during the second half of the century in places ranging from Aurangabad/Hyderabad

to Patna. These tazkirahs mention poets in places ranging from Ahmedabad and Surat in the west to Murshidabad in the east, and of course there are any number of southerners. The classes of society that the poets represent are equally diverse: Muslim and Hindu noblemen; other Hindus--Brahmans, Rajputs, Kayasths, Khatris, Agarwals; professionals from barber to soldier, from teacher to preacher; Sufis, rakes, kings. Women also appear, as beloveds of poets and occasionally as poets themselves.

One manifestation of the new Urdu culture was its almost morbid obsession with "correctness" in language. Undue--and sometimes even almost mindless--emphasis on "correct" or "standard, sanctioned" speech in poetry and prose, and even in everyday converse, has been one of the most interesting and least understood aspects of Urdu culture from the mid-eighteenth century onward. Persian's immense prestige ("Persian" here includes Arabic) may account for a part of this emphasis. The idea seems to have been to make Reḵẖtah approximate to the Persian of a native Persian speaker. This was elitism of a sort, and may well have been meant to be exactly that.

Shāh Ḥātim is reputed to be the person with whom all this began. He did recommend using words in accordance with their original Arabic/Persian pronunciation--something which, as we have seen, the Dakanīs also recommended, but never practiced. Ḥātim also suggested removal of "Hindvī bhākhā" words from the Reḵẖtah/Hindī poet's active vocabulary. But the suspicion remains that all this may have been a defensive ploy for creating a distance between the language of Valī and that of Delhi. For Ḥātim also emphasised, in no uncertain terms, the primacy of established idiom over bookish idiom. And Ḥātim too doesn't seem to have been at all faithful to his own prescriptions. In the selection from his *dīvān* called *Dīvān zādah* (1755/6), which he made by "purging" his older poetry of usages of which he now disapproved, one can find numerous examples of the very things that he was seeking to remove from the language of poetry.

As compared to the prescriptions, however self-contradictory, of Ḥātim, Valī's approach was freer and more relaxed: both local and Arabic/Persian pronunciation had equal right in the language; words used by the common people need not be avoided. This was the credo in Reḵẖtah also, but Valī, because of his influence and popularity, was the great exemplar who was to be imitated--and also denied. This tension comes through clearly in Shāh Ḥātim's Preface to the *Dīvān zādah*:

> This servant [Shāh Ḥātim]...during the past ten or twelve years, has given up many words. He has favoured such Arabic and Persian words as are easy to understand, and are in common use, and has also favoured the idiom of Delhi which the Mirzās of Hind [=the North] and the non-religious standard speakers [*rind*] have in their use, and has stopped the using the language of all and sundry areas, and also the Hindvī that is called the *bhākhā*; [he] has adopted only such a register as is understood by the common people, and is liked by the elites (Shāh Ḥātim 1975:40).

One can see Ḥātim's dilemma: he wants to hunt with the hounds and run with the hare. He doesn't want to declare independence from Valī, but also wants to emphasise his Delhi-ness. He wants to use Arabic and Persian vocabulary, but only such as can be commonly understood. (Valī was quite fond of Arabic phrases.) He wants to use language that is sophisticated and secular, language used by the Mirzās (educated upper classes) and *rind*s (more or less free-living, non-religious frequenters of wine houses and market places--the educated, carefree kind of people) of the North, but the language should also be such as can be understood by the common people of Delhi (not Aurangabad). He doesn't want to use Braj Bhāshā, the

language of areas to the south of Delhi (that is, toward Aurangabad), and from which both Dakanī and Reḵẖtah had derived a number of *tatsam* words (words with which Valī's language abounds).

Ḥātim's agenda was basically twofold: its negative part was his (un)conscious desire to move away from Valī; its positive part was his wish to bring the language of poetry into line with that of the Mirzās, the *rind*s, and the common people of Delhi. Balancing all these elements was a task, but great poets like Mīr performed it very well. Unfortunately, it was the least important and the least right-minded part of Shāh Ḥātim's agenda--namely, downplaying the value of *tatsam* words--that caught the eye and fancy of many later historians. What was an attempt to arrive at a secular, urbanised and urbane, modern-idiomatic, literate but not overburdened language was seen, and hailed, as exclusionism and "reformism," as if the language were a criminal or a patient who needed reform or healing, and it was the duty of the poet to perform this task.

There is no doubt that the proportion of *tatsam* vocabulary declined in Reḵẖtah/Hindī over the second half of the eighteenth century. But was it because of Ḥātim, or other reasons not yet discovered? Was Ḥātim describing in the guise of prescription, and the language at that time was changing faster than we make allowance for? One would need more evidence than is available at present to ascribe the decline in the number of *tatsam* words in literary Urdu to the "exclusionism" and "reforms" inaugurated by Ḥātim.

In any case, Urdu literary culture from the late eighteenth century onwards does place an unfortunate stress, which is also entirely disproportionate to its value, on "purism," "language reform," "purging the language of undesirable usages," and--worst of all--privileging all Persian-Arabic over all Urdu. Urdu is the only language whose writers have prided themselves on "deleting" or "excising" words and phrases from their active vocabulary. Instead of taking pride in the enlargement of vocabulary, they took joy in limiting the horizon of language, even going to the extent of banishing many words used by literate speakers, or even by their own ustads (Muṣḥafī 1990). Why this Persian-privileging and "purifying" process came into existence, and why Urdu writers themselves took an active part in establishing and perpetuating it, is a question that I have addressed, though not entirely solved, elsewhere (Faruqi 1998).

Of course, the power of *langue* is always greater than that of *parole*, and Urdu is no exception. Thousands of "incorrect" or "questionable" words and phrases entered even the literary language, despite the restrictions, and are entering even now. Yet many of the taboos that originated in the early nineteenth century are still in place. In theory, and also to a large extent in practice, Urdu literary idiom remains the most restrictive kind imaginable. This linguistic restrictiveness contrasts most starkly with the steady expansion of literary theory that we see from Valī (1665/7-1707) to Shāh Naṣīr (1755?-1838) and Shaiḵẖ Nāsiḵẖ (1776-1838).

The first major discovery in the field of literary theory was that a distinction could be made between *maẓmūn* (theme), and *maʿnī* (meaning). Classical Arab and Iranian theorists use the term *maʿnī* to mean "theme, content." As late as 1752, we find Ṭek Chand Bahār defining the word *maʿnī* as "synonym of *maẓmūn*" (Bahār [1752] 1865/6:2:614). Barely fifty years later, *Shams ul-luḡẖāt*, the next great Persian dictionary compiled in India, defines *maʿnī* as "that which is connoted by the word" (*Shams ul-luḡẖāt* [1804/5] 1891/2:2:252). The idea that a poem could be *about* something (*maẓmūn*, theme), and could *mean* something different, or more (*maʿnī*, meaning), may have come from the Sanskrit. One is reminded of Mammaṭa's

classification, following Ānandavardhana, of different kinds of meanings, and surpluses of meaning (Todorov 1986:12-13, 27).

In Urdu, Mullā Nuṣratī Bījāpūrī (1600-1674) seems to have been the first to use the term *maẓmūn* in the sense of "theme, idea." Since he does so a number of times, and the context is one of poetic excellence, he is doubtless making a point in literary theory:

/Reveal, oh Lord, on the screen
Of my poetic thought
The freshness and virginity
Of all my themes/ (Nuṣratī 1959:9).

/Your manner is new,
And your speech
Appeals to the heart.
Your themes are lofty,
And colourful/[6] (Nuṣratī 1959:27).

/I spoke throughout
By means of new themes, and thus
Revealed the power
Of God's inpiration/ (Nuṣratī 1959:425).

/New, fresh themes
Are my weapons
To cool and kill
My opponent's breath/ (Nuṣratī 1959:426).

Nuṣratī, a man of great learning, may have known Sanskrit. Or he may have picked up a point or two from Telugu-speaking literary friends, or from his Kannada--he was originally from an area which is now in Karnataka (as, for that matter, is Bijapur too at the present time). In any case, he would have been aware of the fact that such a distinction was being made, or assumed, by his "Indian style" Persian-writing colleagues--and he himself said that he made Dakanī poetry resemble that of Persian. More importantly, he also said in his *Gulshan-e ʿishq* (Garden of Love, 1657) that there are many "Hindī" [=Indian] excellences that cannot be properly transported into Persian, and he, Nuṣratī, having discovered the essence of both, had created a new kind of poetry by mixing the essence of one with the other (Jālibī 1977:1:335).

The introduction of this far-reaching distinction between theme and meaning made several things possible. It was, for instance, recognised that while themes were theoretically infinite, very few of them were acceptable in poetry. Thus the search for new, acceptable themes, or for new ways to express old themes, became a noble occupation for the poet, and was called *maẓmūn āfirīnī* (creation of themes). This gave rise to a mode in which the theme's novelty, or far-fetchedness, became an objective for its own sake. Far-fetched or novel themes also had, however, to pass the test of acceptability. This was called *k̲h̲iyāl bandī* (capturing imaginary, abstract, elusive themes), and the mode, though not the term, seems to have begun with the Indian-style Persian poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Urdu, traces of

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[6]Here, he praises the poet-king, ʿAlī ʿĀdil Shāh II.

this manner can be found in Valī, ʿAbd ul-Valī Uzlat, and Mīr. By the end of the eighteenth century, it was firmly in position as the ruling mode of the day.

Praising the beloved's beauty, for instance, was a major theme. Praising the beauty of her face was a major sub-theme. Praising the eyes, lips, cheeks, so forth, were major sub-sub-themes. Praising something for which there was no space in any of the conceivable categories presented several kinds of challenge: one had to find such a thing, then one needed to imagine, or find, some praiseworthy aspect of it, and then, hardest of all, one needed to invent terms of praise that conformed to the dictates of convention. This is how Mīr looks at the beloved's pockmarked face:

/They weren't so plentiful,
The pockmarks on your face--
Who has been planting
His glances on your face?/ (Mīr 1968:389).

This is brilliant, for it implies beauty both before and after disfigurement by small pox. But the verse turns upon a wordplay: in Urdu, one of the ways to convey the act of looking intently at something is to say, "to bury/embed/plant the eyes or the glances in/on something." Now Jurʾat (1748-1809) imagines a direr situation but doesn't quite achieve the image that could bring off the desired effect:

/The body of that rosy-Rose
Bathed in the efflorescence
Of smallpox: like the action
Of the moth on bright velvet/ (Jurʾat 1971:175).

Jurʾat uses the word *gul* for the beloved, which means "rose, flower," and also "scar, spot." This is happy wordplay, but the image of the rose-body doesn't go well with that of velvet. Now look at Nāsiḳh, greatest of the *ḳhiyāl band* poets:

/When blisters of smallpox
Appeared on the beloved's face,
The bulbuls were deceived:
Dew-drops on rose petals, surely?/ (Nāsiḳh 1847:19).

Like Mīr, Nāsiḳh introduces an outsider into the story; the difference is that in Mīr, the outsider causes the harm, and in causing it, reaffirms the "lookability" of the beloved's face. In Nāsiḳh, the outsider presents another's point of view, and the subtlety is that the other is the bulbul or nightingale, the quintessential lover, while the rose is the quintessential beloved. Thus the beloved's ravaged face is not really ravaged, the bulbul takes it for rose petals bathed in dew. Both the *shiʿr*s also affirm by suggestion (*kināyah*) the beloved's delicateness, but in different ways: in the Mīr *shiʿr*, the beloved is so delicate that that the onlooker's glances hurt and break under the skin like needles, pitting the face. In the Nāsiḳh *shiʿr*, the delicate, rosy smoothness of the skin causes the blisters to glow like dewdrops.

It must be remembered that many *shiʿr*s of *ḳhiyāl bandī* sound faintly (or even strongly) bizarre in English translation today. One is tempted to believe that they would not sound entirely outlandish to "thinking poets" (in Coleridge's words) like John Donne, or other metaphysical poets whose poetry is characterised by what Dr Johnson described as "forced thoughts, and rugged metre." Dr Johnson went on to say:

From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly

strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should transmit to things.

> Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose, had been rarely attempted; we had few elegances or flowers of speech, the roses had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been judged to enliven one another (Johnson 1952:333-34).

This passage could very well be rewritten, omitting the tone and tenor of disapproval, to read as an excellent and perceptive evaluation and appreciation of what the Urdu *ḳhiyāl band* poets were trying to do.

Consideration of *ḳhiyāl bandī* took me nearly half a century ahead in my narrative, for *ḳhiyāl bandī* came into its own toward the end of the eighteenth century. The main mode of early eighteenth-century poets was *īhām*. If *ḳhiyāl bandī* sought to push to the limit the poet's innovativeness (and in fact also his luck), it was the frequent use of *īhām* (wordplay generated by the intent to deceive) that betokened the earliest major effort to make poems yield more meaning than they at first glance seemed to possess. This was called *maʿnī āfirīnī* (creation of meanings), as opposed to *maẓmūn āfirīnī* (creation of themes). The book definition of *īhām* is that the poet uses a word that has two meanings, one of which is remoter, less used, than the other, and the remoter one is the intended meaning. The mind of the listener/reader naturally associates the word in question with the less remote, more immediate meaning, and is thus put into deception, or the listener doubts if he heard the verse correctly. Poets of the early eighteenth century, however, did much more than this.

In the hands of Valī, and the Delhi poets, *īhām* came to mean many kinds of wordplay. They also created situations where the two meanings of the crucial word used to create *īhām* were equally strong, and it wasn't possible to decide which was the poet's intended meaning. Another way of using *īhām* with greater creativity than its book definition allowed for, was for the crucial word to have more than two meanings, where all the meanings were more or less relevant to the poem's discourse (Fārūqī 1997b).

Let us now take a look at an instance of *īhām*. For obvious reasons, they don't fare well in translation, and I'll have to trade off excellence for translatability. Ābrū says:

/I hacked through life in every way,
Dying, and having to live again
Is Doomsday/ (Ābrū 1990:270).

I'll now supply, through brief commentary, the aspects of meaning that are lost in translation. The explications are arranged in the order of obvious to less obvious: I hacked...in every way: (1) Tried all ways of living a life; (2) Suffered all kinds of hardship. Dying,...to live again: (1) To be resurrected; (2) To die by inches, again; (3) To become involved in the cycle of living and dying over and over again. Doomsday: (1) The day of resurrection, when all the dead will be brought back to life; (2) A major calamity; (3) A great deed; (4) A cruelty.

Ali Jawad Zaidi says that Urdu poets of the early eighteenth century adopted the art of *maẓmūn āfirīnī* and complex craftsmanship as a conscious design, and the underlying theory "was not different from what Bhāmaha had developed in the seventh century....The tradition that travelled from Sanskrit to Persian, and from thence to Urdu, may have kept changing its form and structure, but not its spirit" (Zaidi 1970:41).

Similarly, the main point about *īhām* was it was an intended act, and had for its objectives: to deceive, or surprise, the reader/listener; to create a happy effect of wit; and, ultimately, to explore new dimensions of meaning, and the limits of language. Even in its most

elementary form, it was regarded as *ṣanʿat-e maʿnavī* (a figure pertaining to meaning, an *arthālañkāra*), and not just a frivolity, as modern Urdu critics seem unanimously to have held. It had greater complexity than the Sanskrit *shleṣha*, for *shleṣha* seems to recognise only two senses of a word to be in operation. In fact, Udbhaṭa seems to have denied even two senses to a word, holding that in case of *shleṣha*, "the words should be regarded as different when they have different senses, even though their forms may be the same." The position of Mammaṭa was closer to the concept of *īhām* as defined in the books--one word, two meanings (Kunjunni Raja [1963] 1977:44-45). Except that in the hands of the Urdu poet, an *īhām*-based utterance could convey many more than just two meanings.

      Another insight pertaining to literary theory and practice was provided by recognition of the fact that there can be poems that make a direct appeal to the emotions, but whose meaning may be, at least at first flush, and perhaps always, not very clear, or very valuable. Reconsideration and close analysis may, in some cases, reveal the poem to be the site of possibilities or actual occurrence of significant meaning. But in all such poems, meaning, that is the analysable content, is not the most important part of the poem. The quality that made this possible was called *kaifiyat*, a state of subtle and delicious enjoyment--an enjoyment that could be of the nature of the pleasure that one derives from tragedy, or a sad piece of music. Also, *kaifiyat* does not permit sentimentality, "sentimentality" here being held to mean an extravagance in words, words that are larger and louder than the emotion that the poem is trying to convey. *Kaifiyat* makes no overt appeal to the listener/reader's emotion. In many cases, the protagonist/speaker's own mood or state of mind may be difficult to fathom. Certainly, it is always complex enough to discourage a direct, linear interpretation.

      The concept of *kaifiyat* resembles *dhvani* in some respects. Krishnamoorthy informs us of Ānandavardhana's appreciation in a poem of "the vital animation provided by the emotional content described in all its variety, including states of mind." Ānandavardhana cites an example provided by Bhaṭṭendurāja, in which the latter describes the physical and emotional response of the *gopī*s when they first look at Krishna in his full youth. Krishnamoorthy paraphrases Ānandavrdhana's comments on Bhaṭṭendurāja's *muktaka* as follows: "For one who cannot respond to the intensity of love in this stanza, it cannot have any poetic value. There is no recognisable figure of speech beyond two common-place similes, nor any highly striking poetic gem embodying the rasa of *sŕngāra* or love" (Krishnamoorthy 1985:193-95).

      While *dhvani* is a more comprehensive term than *kaifiyat*, what Ānandavardhana seems to be saying here is precisely what most often happens in a verse with *kaifiyat* (Pritchett 1994:119-22). The absence of striking metaphors or images makes a verse of *kaifiyat* even harder to translate than an *īhām*-bearing verse; here is one such example:

        /I looked at her, and sighed a sigh

        I looked at her with longing, once/ (Muṣhafī 1971:3:443).

      It can be said that the mood of a *kaifiyat*-bearing verse recalls that of an accomplished Elizabethan lyric, or song. This view would be somewhat reductionistic if applied always, and especially to a truly great poet like Mīr, whose *kaifiyat* poems are found very often to hold complex meanings too. It should, however, generally hold true for verses like the one quoted above. Consider Shakespeare, in *Twelfth Night* (Act II, Scene iv):

        /Come away, come away, death,

          And in sad cypress let me be laid;

        Fly away, fly away, breath;

          I am slain by a fair cruel maid.

My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
                O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
                Did share it./

Let me round off this discussion of *kaifiyat* with an example from a ghazal by Mīr, in his third *dīvān*, compiled around 1785:

/I wept away all the blood there was
In my heart; where is any drop left now?
Sorrow turned me to water
And my life flowed away,
What is there left of me now?/ (Mīr 1968:556)

The interrogative has a rhetorical power in Urdu which English cannot match--and my translation is feeble enough. Yet if not the rhetorical power, some of the pensive, bitter-heavy mood perhaps does come through--the voice of one who has seen all weariness, all departures, and all journeys. Yet like Shakespeare, Mīr gives free rein to his instinct for wordplay even in such situations.

I devote so much space to *khiyāl bandī* and *kaifiyat* because *khiyāl bandī*, if at all known to modern Urdu scholars, is one of the unmentionables of Urdu poetry; hardly any critic has had the courage to recognise that Ġhālib--whom most people today regard as the greatest Urdu poet--was a *khiyāl band* to the core. As for *kaifiyat*, the term is unknown, and modern poets like Firāq Gorakhpūrī (1896-1982), some of whose poetry evinces the quality of *kaifiyat*, have been praised for entirely the wrong reasons.

Another concept, not fully developed or realised, but clearly present in poets from Mīr to Shāh Naṣīr, and even Ġhālib, was that of *shorish*, or *shor angezī*. The phrase *shor angez* has been present in Persian since at least the sixteenth century. It seems to have become a technical term by the end of the seventeenth century. A poem was considered *shor angez* if it had the quality of passionate, yet impersonal comment on the outside universe, or the external state of things (Pritchett 1994:113-16). Then there were matters concerning the grammar of poetry, like *rabt* (connection between the two lines of a verse), and matters flowing from *īhām*--like *ri'āyat* (consonance) and *munāsibat* (affinity), both pertaining to the play of words in extending or strengthening the meaning in a poem--which came into prominent consideration by about 1750.

Thus a number of theoretical ideas, or refinements of existing ideas, about the nature and art of poetry were developed in the century and a half that passed after Valī came to Delhi in the year 1700. The process stopped when the great discontinuity of 1857 occurred. Old ideas were given up, or lost, in the new literary ethos that looked to what it thought was British (or European) culture for providing both model and ratification. After 1857, classical poetics in Urdu lost prestige so fast that it had all but disappeared by the time the new century arrived; this process of change, and its implications for Urdu poetry, has been studied with sympathy and understanding by Frances Pritchett (Pritchett 1994).

Urdu writers began to leave Delhi by about 1760. The exodus was not so great, nor life in Delhi so uniformly intolerable, as "official" historians tend to describe. In fact, the century, for all its turmoils and upheavals, seems to have been a great one for writers who wanted to travel. A reasonably exhaustive list of notable writers who travelled about in the eighteenth century might occupy many pages. On the whole, more people left Delhi than came to it. The process continued until about the end of the century. Lucknow gained the most, but

other cities like Murshidabad, Banaras, Patna, and Calcutta (at the turn of the century) also made important acquisitions.

The eighteenth century was much more aware of itself than the previous one. There was greater contact among poets. Writers from the North generally knew about those from the South, though they may not always have acknowledged them. Writers from the South knew quite well the works of their Northern counterparts. Criticisms and appreciations were constantly offered in writing or orally. Bāqar Āgāh (1745-1808), the greatest Dakanī/Reḳhtah literary personality of the eighteenth century, though himself unacknowledged by tazkirah writers of the North, evinces familiarity with the works of all major northern poets of his time; he regards only Saudā as worthy of his steel (Navīdī 1994; Rāhī Fidāʾī 1997:108). The extent to which distantly placed poets kept abreast of each other's work at the time is evident in many literary anecdotes (Iftiḳhār 1968:13-14). Bāqar Āgāh, like many of his peers, was at home in more languages than one: he was an excellent poet in Arabic too, and knew Telugu and Sanskrit as well.

Over time, Delhi's hegemonic claims were increasingly challenged by the growing prosperity of Lucknow, and the theory of "two schools of Urdu poetry--Delhi and Lucknow" came into existence (Zaidi 1970; Petievich 1992). By the time the major modernising texts of Urdu literature came out--*Water of Life* by Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād (1880), *Introduction to Poetry and Poetics* by Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī (1893), *Kāshif ul ḥaqāʾiq* (The Revealer of Truths) by Imdād Imām Aṡar (1894), and *Yādgār-e ġhālib* (A Memorial of Ġhālib) by Ḥālī (1897)--both time and space had quite changed for Urdu literature, and our narrative must stop here.[7]

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