

saudā suluf: Urdu in the two versions of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *Āsār us-ṣanādīd*

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When Sayyid Ahmad Khan was 30 years old, he published an account of the Urdu language, embedded in a handsome illustrated volume about the buildings, old and new, and contemporary personalities of Delhi. A *munsif* in the judicial service of the East India Company, he had just returned to his native city after an absence of some seven years. The first edition of *Āsār us-ṣanādīd* (Traces of the Notables) has much in common with earlier Persian prototypes, more an album (*muraqqa*), guidebook, gazetteer and biographical dictionary (*tazkira*) than historical narrative. Over the following five years, however, Sayyid Ahmad came in contact with members of the newly founded Archaeological Society of Delhi, Arthur Austin Roberts, the British commissioner of Delhi, and Edward Thomas, who encouraged him to recast the book as a more strictly "archaeological history."¹ In that second version, he included a short *khātimah* (appendix) devoted to Urdu, but eliminated extensive discussions of contemporary poets and extracts of their poetry.²

¹ Edward Thomas refers "Syud Ahmad Khān's excellent Archaeological History of Delhi" in *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* [1871], reprint ed. (Delhi: Munshiram Manohar Lal, 1967), p. 20.

² Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, *Āsār al-ṣanādīd* ([Delhi:] Maṭba' Sayyid al-Aḥbār, 1263H. 1847 [C.E.]); *Āsār al-ṣanādīd: tārikh purānī aur na'ī 'amaldāron aur purānī aur na'ī 'umdah 'imāraton ke bābat zila'ah Dihlī* (Qila-i mu'alla: maṭṭa` sultani, 1270 H., 1854 [C.E.]). I have used copies in the British Library and, for the second edition, New York Public Library. Christian W. Troll has written an exemplary account of the two versions: "A Note on an early topographical work of Sayyid Ahmad Khan: *Āsār al-sanādīd*," *J. Royal Asiatic Society* (1972), pp. 135-46, which includes extensive bibliographical information. I am grateful to C.M. Naim for sharing with me his, "Syed Ahmad and his two books called 'Asar-al-Sanadid,'" forthcoming in *Modern Asian Studies*. My present essay derives from a longer work in progress and a paper originally written at the suggestion of Vasudha Dalmia for a panel at the 18th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Lund University, Sweden, July 2004. Jennifer Dubrow shared with

The two versions are substantially different in what they say about the language, especially when taken in the full context of the two works in which they appear. The first edition was above all a celebration of Delhi as a living culture, a *gulshan-e jannat*, (garden of paradise);³ the second was an archaeological study concerned with the chronological layers in the city's history of superseding regimes of power and authority. The brief accounts of Urdu partake of this distinction, an epistemological reordering that sets the stage for thinking about language and languages in a new way. The change in Sayyid Ahmad's own prose in these two editions may also express this shift. Both discussions serve as documents of the times in which they were written, clues to the linguistic self-consciousness of the writer with respect to language, literature and language community.⁴

In the first version of *Āsār us-ṣanādīd*, Sayyid Ahmad starts with the here and now: Urdu is identified as the language current "here," the language that "everyone speaks."⁵ Although Delhi is an ancient, imperial city, it had always been characterized by linguistic disunity. People spoke separate languages (*bhākhā*), first under Hindu rulers, then under the succession of Muslim dynasties. Under Muslim rule, bargaining (*sauda suluf*), exchanging, buying and selling (*lēnē dēnē bēchnē bachānē*) were all the more difficult because of the diversity of languages. Then

me her work and a photocopy of the first edition of *Āsār us-sanādīd*, and Professor Asghar Abbas of Aligarh Muslim University very kindly sent me copies of facsimiles of the two editions, recently published by the Sir Syed Academy, Aligarh Muslim University, 2007. The Harvard University Library copy of the second edition is now available on googlebooks.

³ *Āsār al-sanādīd*, 1947 ed. [2007 facsimile, p. 11].

⁴ For current scholarship cf. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵ See Appendix I of this paper.

under Akbar, Persian became so dominant that other languages could not develop. Only when Shahjahan established his capital in Delhi and commanded people from all over the land to settle there did the languages begin to strike a bargain (again, *sauda suluf*). Because it was the language of the court, associated with the royal bazaar, called the *urdū*, it was called Urdu and became virtually the language of all the Muslims of Hindustan. Then came the great Urdu poets Mir and Sauda, who established the literary reputation of the language. Delhi was to Urdu what Shiraz was to Persian; it set the standard (*sanad*). Unfortunately people from other cities tend to make excessive use of Persian words and constructions. They undermine the *urdūpan*, the special character, of the language. No rules can be established to determine how much Persian one may use in Urdu. Such matters can only rely on the actual speech of the *ahl-i zubān*, the native speakers of the language, that is the people of Delhi.⁶

Although this discussion dips into the past, what it is really about is the contemporary linguistic authority of Delhi. Urdu starts with the establishment of the most recent of Delhi's cities, Shahjahanabad, but it is a result of a bargaining process, *saudā suluf*, among speakers of different, unspecified languages. It is the literary achievement of two great poets in the late eighteenth century that has established the excellence of the language, comparable to what the great poets of Shiraz, such as Hafiz and S`adi, did for Persian. This discussion of Urdu, one may note, stands out in the first edition for its easy, idiomatic expression, as if focusing on the language led Sayyid Ahmad to abandon the heavy Persian rhetoric that characterizes most of the

⁶ 1947 ed. [2007 facsimile, p. 428]. See translation in Appendix I.

first edition.⁷ It was, in fact, not just the people of other cities who were capable of undermining *urdūpan* in order to display their learning and virtuosity in the tradition of Indian Persian.

In *A House Divided*, Amrit Rai seized on a quotation from this passage to show that Sayyid Ahmad considered Urdu to be the language of “the Muslims of India,” a piece of evidence in his general argument that the differentiation of Urdu from Hindi emerged as a rearguard action on the part of the declining Mughal aristocracy. Read, however, in its full context, the passage as a whole suggests something quite different: the standard language, Sayyid Ahmad claims, should be set by the ordinary speech of the *ahl-i zubān* of Delhi. People of other cities have undermined the special character of Urdu, its *Urdūpan*, by weighing it down with Persian vocabulary and constructions. It is not Muslims that have created Urdu, but the processes exchange among numerous groups in a particular place. The phrase that Amrit Rai quoted, from a quotation in a secondary source, is “*goyā hindūstān kē musalmān kī yahī zubān thī .*” He translated this as, “That is to say, this was the language of the Muslims of India.”⁸ This is probably more emphatic than it needs to be. I would translate it as “It was as if this was the particular language of the Muslims of Hindustan,” that is, that the language of Shahjahanabad became popular among the Muslims of the Gangetic region, Hindustan. It is clear from the

⁷ Alṭ āf Ḥusain Ḥālī, *Ḥayāt-i Javīd* [1901], reprint ed. (Lahore: `Ishrat Publishing House, 1965), p. 73, criticizes the first edition for its old style, overly colorful, exaggerated and complex language. See also Troll’s analysis of comparable passages in the two editions, loc. cit, pp. 137-39.

⁸ Amrit Rai, *A House Divided: the Origin and Development of Hindi-Urdu*, reprint ed. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 260; cf. my articles, “Zuban-i Urdu-i Mu’alla and the Idol of Linguistic Origins,” *Annual of Urdu Studies* (1994) and “Eloquence and Authority in Urdu: Poetry, Oratory and Film,” in Katherine Ewing, ed. *Shari`at and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

passage as a whole that Sayyid Ahmad, like Mir Aman and Insha before him, is asserting the linguistic authority of Delhi, not of Muslims in general.

Sayyid Ahmad clearly drew upon Mir Aman's discussion of the origins of Urdu in the preface to *Bāgh o Bahār*, the text published in 1801 at Fort William College for the instruction of British officials. In addition to following a good deal of the general argument, he quotes it explicitly in recognition that different people have different ideas about what counts as good language: "Not that, in the words of Mir Aman, anyone thinks ill of his (own) turban, gait or speech. If someone asks a peasant, and he calls it citified [*shahrwalla*] and thinks his is better - well, the wise know which is best."⁹ In contrast to the highly Persianized diction of most of the first edition of *Āsār us-ṣanādīd*, Sayyid Ahmad's account of Urdu partakes of the earthy, playful language that characterizes *Bāgh o Bahār*. The great difference is that Mir Aman goes on to attribute the perfection of Urdu to his Scottish patron, John Gilchrist, whereas Sayyid Ahmad mentions only Mir and Sauda.

During the years that intervened between the two editions of *Āsār us-ṣanādīd*, however, Sayyid Ahmad was increasingly drawn into European ideas, methods and social relations. When Arthur Austin Roberts, the Collector and Magistrate of Delhi, traveled to England, he took a copy of the first edition with him to present to the Royal Asiatic Society. He returned with the idea of enlisting Sayyid Ahmad to help him prepare an English translation. In the process of discussing the work, however, Sayyid Ahmad was persuaded that it needed substantial revision with respect

⁹ This is a direct quote from *Bāgh o Bahār*. See C. Shackle and R. Snell, *Hindi and Urdu since 1800: a Common Reader* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), p. 86; also, Mir Amman, *A Tale of Four Dervishes*, tr. by Mohammed Zakir (New Delhi: Penguin, 1994), pp. xv-xi.

organization, chronology, and the accuracy of many of the details in the text. Although Sayyid Ahmad already had significant interactions with a number of British contemporaries, his association with the Archaeological Society of Delhi and some of its British members arose out of this project.¹⁰

The discussion of the language in the second edition of *Āsār us-ṣanādīd* is offered as an appendix (*khātimah*) to the three chapters (*bāb*), published originally in separate fascicles, that make up the body of the text.¹¹ Throughout the work, due attention is paid to dates, provided according to Hindu, Muslim and Christian calendars. The appendix on Urdu serves as an introduction to the final section devoted to reproductions of inscriptions in Brahmi, Nagri, Kufic, Naskh, and Nastaliq scripts that Sayyid Ahmad and his collaborator, Maulana Imam Baksh Sahba`i, carefully traced on the sites. According to Hali, Sayyid Ahmad's biographer, the task of copying the higher inscriptions of the Qutb Minar required him to be hoisted in a *chhīnkā*, a sort of net made of rope, while his friend looked on in terror.¹² The vigorous empiricism of this "enthusiastic antiquary," as Edward Thomas called him, had totally transformed *Āsār us-ṣanādīd*.¹³

The appendix on the Urdu language in the second edition consists of eleven numbered paragraphs, followed by brief literary examples of the various poetic forms discussed in the text. The first five paragraphs are historical, starting with an undifferentiated condition of linguistic

¹⁰ English Preface to 2nd ed. and Troll, pp. 139-143. On Roberts, see C.E. Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography* (London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., 1906), p. 360.

¹¹ See my translation in Appendix II.

¹² Hāli, *Ḥayāt-i Javīd*, p. 72.

¹³ The quote is from Thomas is in *Chronicles*, loc. cit.

unity: under Hindu rule the language of reading, writing and speech was Hindi. With the establishment of Muslim rule, the language of government became Persian, but the language of the subjects remained the same. Here Sayyid Ahmad provides a definite date, with Muslim, Christian and Hindu (Vikramjit) equivalents. He then jumps forward 300 years to the reign of Sikandar Lodhi, again with a definite date according to Muslim and Christian calendars, when Hindu Kayasthas, educated in Persian, took up official posts throughout the realm. Other Hindus then followed, also learning Persian. Although Hindus continued to speak Hindi and Muslims, Persian, the poet Amir Khusrau had used "bhāshā" in his Persian verse and written some minor works entirely in that language. Then came Shahjahan - again there are dates - and the establishment of Shahjahanabad, causing Persian speaking Muslims and Hindi speaking Hindus to create a new mixed language. Since this mixed language was associated with the army and the royal court, it came to be known as Urdu. Under the rule of Aurangzeb - again with a specific date according to two calendars - people started writing poetry in this language, though it wasn't very good. He says that Wali was not the first, and only with Mir and Sauda did poetry reach a high level. Mir Aman, Sayyid Ahmad says, later achieved in Urdu prose what Mir had done for poetry. `Abd ul-Qadir and Rafi' uddin translated the Qur`ān and other religious texts into Urdu. This concludes the historical sequence.

Sayyid Ahmad then goes on to discuss some of the features of Urdu literature. Most poetry, for example, follows Persian conventions in identifying the beloved as male, but *rekhtī* poetry is written as if by a woman. Finally, he defines three kinds of word play in verse: *nisbatēn*, *pahelī*, and *makrī*. He closes the discussion with a few examples of these verse forms: some

riddles traditionally associated with Amir Khusrau, a couplet in *rekhtī*, and three couplets by Mir.¹⁴

Sayyid Ahmad's first edition had recognized a multiplicity of languages and language communities, the migrations over time of various groups both from within India and outside, the absence of standardization. Political domination only played a role when Shah Jahan established a new capital city, setting the conditions for increased mobility and exchange. In this account Urdu emerged in the first instance out of commercial transactions and everyday conversation, *sohbat*, and it was the work of the great poets of the language that established the standard language and made it a model for a wider linguistic community beyond the city. Sayyid Ahmad's own prose in this first version exemplified the literary and linguistic virtuosity and conversational elegance of this milieu. Above all, Urdu was celebrated as the spoken language of "everyone" "here" in Delhi, the contemporary language of a living culture.

The second version of Sayyid Ahmad's account of Urdu is characterized by its methodical arrangement, unadorned prose style, concern with the chronology of historical stages, and the presentation of samples; it is also notable for the absence of enthusiasm, idiomatic language, and most of all an open sense of variation and flexibility that marked the earlier text. Presented in numbered paragraphs like an official document, each item in the series is enclosed in a separate compartment, first according to a notion of historical sequence, then according to particular literary features. This second discussion presumes an undifferentiated Hindi "*bhāshā*" of the Hindus, on the one hand, and Persian "*zubān*" as the language of a foreign Muslim ruling

¹⁴ Aside from the conventional use of Mir's pen-name in two of the couplets, Sayyid Ahmad doesn't identify the authors. See Amrit Rai's discussion and selection of the riddles controversially attributed to Amir Khusrau in *A House Divided*, pp. 140-45.

class, on the other. Urdu is presented as a mixture of the two, but no claims are made for its linguistic dominance, let alone for its association with Delhi or, for that matter, Muslims. It is, instead, set apart as a residue of minor literary curiosities.

The difference between Sayyid Ahmad's two brief accounts of Urdu is probably more interesting than the substance of each taken separately. What he has to say about language should probably be read alongside the major sections of the book devoted to descriptions of the forts, temples, mosques, palaces and tombs of Delhi's past. One could imagine, and perhaps locate, for example, accounts of the site of the Qutb Minar and its adjoining mosque that are analogous to later debates about Hindi/Urdu/Hindustani: bits and pieces of "Hindu" culture, broken down and reassembled into a whole, new "Muslim" structure. Stones with their sculptured images become mosques; words with their "Indic" origins, sounds and syntax stitched into ghazals and masnavis. This is the sort of thing that scholars of a previous generations like Louis Dumont, building on a long tradition of British colonial social anthropology, argued with respect to Hindu-like "caste" and ritual among Muslims in India; the elements might be similar, but they were differently arranged into separate ideological structures. "Hindus and Muslims form two distinct societies from the point of view of ultimate values," he concluded.¹⁵ But Sayyid Ahmad did not believe that. At least at this point in his life, the issue had not been drawn in these terms. He was not trying to make grand statements about all of India, India as a nation, or what it would mean to be a Muslim or to speak Urdu in a world constituted by such categories. His ideas of language and history were more modest than that, a matter of bargaining, *sauda suluf*, among multiple groups in what was still a fluid society. But by rearranging his study of Delhi's monuments into a

¹⁵ *Homo Hierarchicus*, e.g., (London: Paladin, 1972), p. 257.

chronological account and demarcating Urdu as an object of study, with a history and an identifiable community of speakers, Sayyid Ahmad was one of those who raised the question how culture could be made to serve the purposes of inclusion and exclusion in a colonial society.

Appendix I

زبان کا بیان

بیانِ جوابِ زبانِ مروجِ ہر اور جس میں سب لوگ بولتے جانتے ہیں اور سکا نام اردو
ہی اور تحقیق اسکی یون ہی کہ اردو فارسی لفظ ہی اور اسکے معنی بازار کے ہیں اور
اردو سے مراد اردو می شاہان ہر + اگر چہ دلی بہت قدیم شہر ہے اور ہندوؤں کے
نام راجا پر جادو کا ہمیشہ سے دارالسلطنت رہا ہے لیکن سب اپنی اپنی بیا کہا جوتے
ہتھ ایک کی دوسرے سے زبان نہیں ملتی تھی + جب کہ ہندوستان میں مسلمانوں کی

۱۲
 عہداری ہوئی اور مسلمان لوگ ان شہروں میں آئے اور یہی مشکل بڑھی اور اس
 نئی زبان کے لوگوں کے آئے سے سودا سلف لینے دینے بیچنے بچانے میں وقت
 پرینے لگی اول اول تو مسلمانوں کی عہداری میں اختلاف رہا کبھی کسی کی بادشاہت رہی
 اور کبھی کسی کی غوری آئے اور کبھی لودھی اور کبھی پٹھان اور کبھی منلی اس سب سے
 زبان کا بدستور اختلاف چلا گیا اور کوئی شخص اسکی اصلاح کچھ نہ بڑا جب کہ
 کہ بادشاہ ہوا ایک گونہ سلطنت کو قیام ہوا اور سب لوگ لینے اپنے ٹھکانے
 بیٹھے اور علم کا بھی چرچا ہوا۔ لیکن اوس زمانہ میں فارسی زبان کی ایسی قدر تھی کہ
 لوگ اور سیطرے متوجہ بھی نہیں ہوتے تھے جب کہ شہاب الدین شاہ جہان
 بادشاہ ہوا اور اوسنے انتظام سلطنت کا کیا اور سب ملکوں کے دکن کے حاکم
 رہنے کا حکم دیا اور دلی شہر کو نئے سرے سے آباد کیا اور قلعہ بنایا اور شاہ جہان آباد
 اوسکا نام رکھا۔ اوسوقت اس شہر میں تمام ملکوں کے لوگوں کا مجمع ہوا ہر ایک
 کی گفتار و رفتار جدا جدا تھی ہر ایک کا رنگ ڈھنگ نرالا تھا۔ جب اسپسین معاملہ
 کہتے لاچار ایک لفظ اپنی زبان کا دو لفظ اوسکی زبان کے تین لفظ دوسرے
 کی زبان کے ملا کر بولتے اور سودا سلف لیتے۔ رفتہ رفتہ اس زبان میں ایسی
 ترکیب پائی کہ یہ خود ایک نئی زبان ہو گئی اور جو کہ یہ زبان خاص بادشاہی ہزاروں
 میں مروج تھی اوسکی زبان رد و کھا کرتے تھے اور بادشاہی امیر امرا
 اسکو بولا کرتے تھے گویا کہ ہندوستان کے مسلمانوں کی یہی زبان تھی۔ پھر ہوتے

خود اس زبان ہی کا اردو نام ہو گیا۔ اور سوقتہ و نزلت ایک رونق حاصل کی اور
 دن بدن تراشش خراشش اس میں ہوتی گئی یہاں تک کہ جس زمانہ میں میرا در سو دہائی
 اوزہ اپنی خوش زبانی کا بلند کیا تھا اور یہ اوزہ ہر ایک کے کان میں پہنایا تھا اور
 یہ زبان بہت درست ہو گئی تھی اور عجیب رنگ و ہنگ نکال لائی تھی۔ اور کئی بعد
 کچھ کچھ اس زبان میں اور تغیر و تبدیل ہوئی اور اب ایسی سمجھ گئی ہے کہ قیامت تک اس
 ہونی ممکن نہیں اور اس زبان کو شاہجہان باد سے ایسی نسبت ہے جیسے فارسی کو شیراز
 سے۔ دہلے یہاں کے لوگوں کی زبان تمام اردو بولنے والوں کو سند ہے۔ نہیں
 بقول میرامن کے اپنی دستار رفتار گھنار کو کوئی برا نہیں جانتا اگر ایک گنوار سے
 بوسچے تو شہر و ایلے کو نام رکھتا ہے اور اپنے تین سے بہتر سمجھتا ہے خیر عاقلان خود
 میدانند۔ اگرچہ اس زبان میں اکثر فارسی و عربی اور شکر کے الفاظ مستعمل ہیں اور بعض
 بعض نہیں کچھ تغیر و تبدیل کر لی ہے لیکن اس زمانہ میں وہ شہر کے لوگوں نے یہ طریقہ اختیار
 کیا ہے کہ اردو زبان میں یا تو فارسی کے لغت بہت ملا دیتے ہیں اور یا فارسی کی ترکیب پر
 کہنے لگتے ہیں۔ یہ وہ نوباتیں ہیں جنہیں اونسے اردو پن نہیں رہتا۔ اور ظاہر ہے
 کہ اس بات کے لئے کہ کس قدر فارسی کی ترکیب و بجا دے اور کون کو نیسے لغت اور
 زبانوں کے نہ بولے جاوین کوئی قاعدہ نہیں مقرر ہو سکتا۔ یہ بات صرف اہل زبانوں
 کی صحبت پر منحصر ہے۔

(Asar us-sanadid, 1st ed., Part 4, pp. 11-13 [Facsimile ed., Sir Syed Academy, Aligarh Muslim
 University, 2007, pp. 425-27].

The language that is current here and that everyone now speaks is called Urdu. Urdu, in fact, is a Persian word that means bazaar, and Urdu comes from the *urdū* of Shahjahan. Although Delhi is a very ancient city and was always the capital of all the kingdoms [*rājā prājā*] of the Hindus, people spoke separate languages [*bhākhā*] and these languages did not merge. When Muslims took over the administration of Hindustan and Muslim people came into these cities, things got more difficult. With the coming of people speaking new languages, bargaining [*saudā suluf*], buying and selling, became difficult. At first, there was discord in the government of the Muslims, sometimes the rule of one group, sometimes another: the Ghoris came, then the Lodhis, then the Pathans, then the Mughals. And for this reason there was regular discord in language, and nobody could undertake to make reforms. When Akbar became king, a diverse kingdom was established and everyone stayed in a fixed abode. There was intellectual inquiry, but at this time the Persian language had such standing that people did not look elsewhere. When Shahabuddin Shahjahan became king, he reorganized the realm, ordering that representatives of every country [*mulk*] attend and settle in Delhi. He built the fort and named it Shahjahanabad. Then people from every country gathered. Their speech and ways of life were different. When matters came up among them, one word in one language, two words in another and three in another all combined and reached a bargain [*saudā suluf*]. Gradually this language achieved some order and became a new language, and since it was current in the royal bazaars in particular, it was called Urdu. The royal aristocracy used it; and as it was becoming, so to speak, the particular language of the Muslims of Hindustan, it gradually came to be known as Urdu [*gōyā hindūstān kē musalmān kī yahī zubān thī hotē hotē khud is zubān hī kā urdū nām hō gayā*].¹⁶ From that time the language

¹⁶Translated in Amrit Rai, p. 260, as: “That is to say, this was the language of the Muslims of India.” Note that elsewhere, pp. 241-242, he quotes the passage in Asar, 2nd. ed. [A

began to shine and was fashioned till the time that the eloquence of Mir and Sauda raised high its renown and everyone heard of it. Then the language became regular and brought forth a wondrous display [*rang dhang*]. After them there were changes and transformations, and such a confluence [*mānjh*] that nothing could be better till Judgment Day [*qiyāmat*]. Shahjahanabad was to this language what Shiraz was to Persian, that is, the language of the people here set the standard [*sanad*] for all Urdu speakers. Not that, in the words of Mir Aman, anyone thinks ill of his turban, gait or speech. If someone asks a peasant, and he calls it citified [*shahrwāllā*] and thinks his is better -- well, the wise know which is best.¹⁷ Although Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit words are often used in this language, and among them there have been changes and transformations, at that time the people of other cities began writing in a way that mixed in many Persian words and Persian constructions. These things weren't good for maintaining the particular style of Urdu [*Urdūpan*]. It was apparent from these things that no rule could be established to limit Persian constructions and (decide) which words and languages ought not to be used. These matters would have to rely on the conversation [*sohbat*] of native speakers [*ahl-i zubān*].

House Divided (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁷ This is a direct, though unacknowledged quote from *Bāgh o Bahār*. See C. Shackle and R. Snell, *Hindi and Urdu since 1800: a Common Reader* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), p. 86; also, Mir Amman, *A Tale of Four Dervishes*, tr. by Mohammed Zakir (New Delhi: Penguin, 1994), pp. xv-xi.

Appendix II

خامشہ

اردو زبان کی بیان میں

ہندوؤں کی راج میں تو بیان ہندی بہا شاہ بولنی چالنی لکھنی پرینی
اتی تھی ششمہ بھری مطالی اللہ عیسو موافق ۱۲۸۸ ہجرت بکر حاجت کے جب
مسلمانوں کی سلطنت نے بیان تمام بکر اتو بادشاہی فقر فارسی تو
بکر زبان رعایا کی وہی بہا شاری ششمہ بھری مطالی ۱۲۸۸ عیسو تک بکر
بادشاہی فقر کی رعایا میں فارسی کا رواج نہیں ہوا ہے کہ خذرو ر بعد
سلطان بخر لو دہی کی عہد میں سب سے پہلی ہندوؤں میں سی کا یہون نے
جو ہمیشہ سے امورات ملکی اور شریب دفتر میں مداخلت کرتی ہی رہا
لکھنا پرینا شروع کیا پھر رفتہ رفتہ اور قون نے ہی شروع کر لیا اور
فارسی لکھنی پرینی کا ہندوؤں میں ہی رواج ہو گیا
۲ اگرچہ بابر اور جہانگیر کے عہد تک ہندو بہا شاہ میں کچھ تعریف
نہیں

۱۲۶۳ ہجری مطابق ۱۸۴۶ء تک اپنی مل بانڈہا ہی یہ مل نہایت عجیب سے
 لوسی کی کمانیوں پر عجب خوبصورتی سے لٹبہ لٹکائی ہیں اور اوپر
 رستہ بنا یا ہی ایسی ترکیب ان کمانیوں کی رکھی ہے کہ جب کو
 وزنی چیز اتنی ہی تو بوجہ سہار نیکو کمانی جھک جاتی ہے ہر چیز کے
 چلنی سے یہ مل لچکتا ہے اور کمانیان بوجہ ثباتی ہیں اس نواح میں
 اس قسم کا مل عجیب سے زکاری ہے

Asar us-sanadid, 2nd. ed. , pp. 102-03 [googlebooks, from Harvard University Library]

(1) Under of the rule of the Hindus, speaking, writing and reading here were in the Hindi language [bhāshā]. In 587 H., equivalent to 1191 C.E. and 1249 Vikramjit, when the sultanat of the Muslims seized control here, the royal adminstration [daftar] became Persian, but the language of the subjects remained the same. Until 892H., equivalent to 1488 C.E., Persian did not spread among the subjects beyond the royal administration. A little after that, in the era of Sultan Sikandar Lodhi, Kayasthas, who were always occupied with domestic matters [amurāt mulkī] and administrative arrangements, were the first among the Hindus to start to write and read Persian, and gradually other communities [qaum] began, and Persian writing and reading spread among the Hindus too.

(2) There were not any alterations and changes in Hindi up to the era of Babur and Jahangir, but Muslims continued to use Persian in their conversation and Hindus continued to use *bhāshā*. Still in the time of the Khilji rulers, that is, in the thirteenth century C.E., Amir Khusru began to use words in *bhāshā* in his Persian language and recited some riddles and connumdrums [*paheliyān*, *makriyān*¹⁸, *nisbastēn*] in a language that included mostly words in *bhāshā*. Most likely the joining [*milāp*] of the language [*bhāshā*] started from that time, but it could not be said that there was a separate language [*zubān*]. At the time that Shahjahan Badshah settled in the city of Shahjahanabad in 1058 H., equivalent to 1648 C.E., and people gathered from every land [*mulk*], the Persian language [*zubān*] and the Hindi language [*bhāshā*] got very mixed and because of the abundant usage of some Persian words and mostly words in *bhāshā*, there were alterations and changes. As a result of the combination of these two languages in the royal army and imperial court [*urdū-i mu`alla*], a new language was created, and for this reason called the language of *urdū*, then from much usage the word language was omitted, and people started to call the language Urdu. Gradually the language achieved culture [*tahzīb*] and regularity [*arastagī*] to the point that in approximately 1100 H., equivalent to 1688 C.E., that is, in the era of Augangzeb Alamgir, poetic composition started up. Although it is widely believed that Vali was the first to compose poetry in this language, it is clear from Vali's own verses that even before him there were those who composed poems in this language because he makes fun of the language of other poets in his verses; but the poetry of that time was dull and utterly sloppy (*nihāyat sust bandish*). Then day by day it improved to the point that Mir and Sauda brought it to perfection.

¹⁸ “A kind of short poem (or a kind of riddle in verse), of frequent use in the Braj dialect (it consists of four lines each composed of four trochees; in the first three the speaker (a woman) appears to talk of her lover; but, on the question being put by a friend; applied the whole to some other object....” Platts, pp. 1058-59.

- (3) The language of Mir was so clear and cultured and the fine expressions in his verses were so effortless that everyone till this day praises him. Sauda's language is also very fine and the sharpness of his subjects surpasses Mir, but his language doesn't reach Mir's language.
- (4) Among the writers of Urdu prose, Mir Aman, who wrote *Bāgh o Bahār*, has achieved superiority; in fact, Mir Aman's perfection in prose writing is like Mir's in poetry.
- (5) Maulvi Abdul Qadir Sahib and Maulvi Rafi uddin Sahib did the first Urdu translations from Arabic. Maulvi Abdul Qadir Sahib's translation of the Qur'an [*kalām Allah*] was a great authorization of the Urdu lexicon, and Maulvi Rafi uddin Sahib's was a great certification [*umdaḥ dastavez*] of its grammar [*tarkīb nahvī*].
- (6) Poetry in the Urdu language follows the manner of Persian poetry in which a young man writes verse as if in praise of a beautiful boy.
- (7) In the Hindi language the system is for poetry to be in the language of a woman in loving relationship to a man, and occasionally poetry in the Urdu language is written in the same way and people call it *rekhtī*. Probably about 1220 H., equivalent to 1805 C.E., Insha Allah Khan popularized [spread - *ravāj*] this [form].
- (8) All Urdu verse is written according to Persian forms and genres, except the prosody [*vazn*] of riddles and conundrums [*makrī* and *paheli*] is otherwise and the language is what one usually encounters in *bhāshā*.
- (9) *Nisbatēn*, as is well-known, are utterances in which two, three or more things are described in which something doesn't seem to fit, and the other person is asked to find the one thing that can be put together with the rest.

(10) In a *pahelī*, the qualities, features of something are described and someone is asked to identify that thing. The great value of a riddle is that the name of the thing itself comes out in the description of the qualities and features and still the other person doesn't get it.

(11) In a *makrī*, a woman says something that means one thing to her beloved and something else to another person, so that a lover's words can be disguised.