

In addition to the above, two extremely interesting prose works in the North survive from the last three decades of the eighteenth century: Shāh Murādullāh Sañbhālī translated the thirtieth part of the Qur'ān (each part is called a *pārah*, a piece), and wrote a commentary on it. This work, called *Tafstr-e murāddiyah*, was completed in January 1771—that is, roughly two decades before the full translation of the Qur'ān with brief commentary made by Shāh 'Abd ul-Qādir of Delhi (1790). Although printed a number of times in the nineteenth century, the *Tafstr-e murāddiyah* remains largely unknown today. In terms of both prose style and technique of textual explication, Murādullāh Sañbhālī's work sounds more in tune with modern ears. The other prose work is a history of the Rohillas. Called *Qiṣṣah o aḥvāl-e rūhelā* (The Narrative and Circumstances of the Rohillas), it was written by Rustam 'Alī Bijnorī in 1776. Here again, the prose is surprisingly limpid and the argument is easy to follow. The fact that these works remained generally unknown seems to have helped establish the myth that 'modern Urdu prose' began with the College of Fort William.<sup>2</sup>

By the time of 'Uzlat's death, 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. 'Uzlat described his language as Hindī.<sup>3</sup> 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 Mas'ūd Sa'd Salmān (1046-1121) to Ḳhusrau (1253-1325), and then the second age of silence, broken only in Gujarat in the early fifteenth century, can now be enumerated as follows:

<sup>2</sup>For a more detailed account of these two works, see Anṣārī, 'Shāh Murādullāh Sañbhālī', pp. 285-98, and Iqtidār Ḥusain Ṣiddīqī, 'Urdū zabān meñ tārīkh nigāri', pp. 170-87.

<sup>3</sup>Jālibī, *Tārīkh-e adab-e urdū*, vol. 2, pp. 1006-07.

1) Urdu did not attain the status of a literary language before the Sufis took it up in Gujarat in the fifteenth century, closely followed by the Dakanīs.

2) Mas'ūd Sa'd Salmān's and Ḳhusrau's efforts must be termed casual, and not in accordance with any established mode of writing.

3) The fact that there was literary activity in Avadhī in the fourteenth century (we have Mullā Dā'ūd's poem *Chandā'in* in 1379), but not in Urdu, shows that Urdu didn't have a literary status at that time.

4) Urdu's earliest extant literary products are from Gujarat and the Deccan, and are overwhelmingly by the Sufis.

5) Since the Sufis addressed themselves to specific groups of followers and devotees, it was natural for their prose and poetry to be preserved, orally or in writing.

6) No Sufi seems to have made Hindī / Hindvī a vehicle for his literary expression in the North before Shaikh 'Abd ul-Quddūs Gangohī (1455-1538) and Kabīr (d.1518). Neither of these, however, wrote in the mainline *khari bolī* Hindī / Hindvī that we know as Urdu today. More important, neither was in Delhi, which was the command centre of literary culture in the North.

7) The reason for Urdu's late start in literature in the North is therefore to be found in the fact that the Sufis didn't adopt this language, and it had to wait for religious / Sufi impulses to find their expression in it.

8) The reason for the Sufis' not adopting this language in the early centuries seems to be 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.

According to Satish C. Mishra, Gujrī, as an oral language, pre-existed the arrival of the Northern Sufis in Gujarat. He says, 'The language which came to be called Urdu in the later