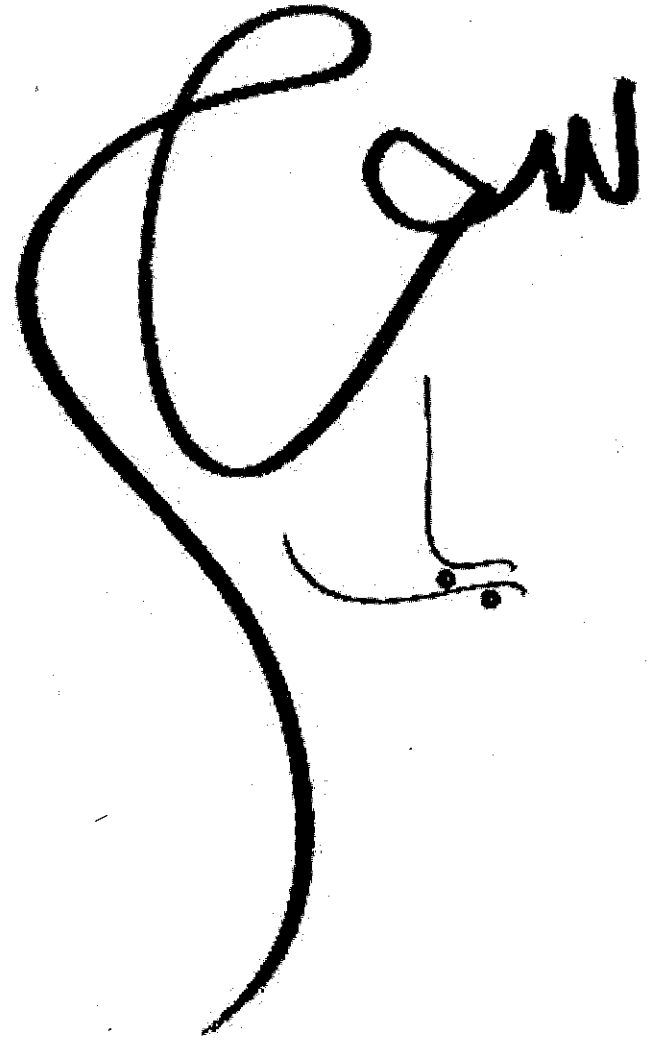


fact, was 'the city of Shāhjahānābād'. This is borne out even by the definitions of the word *urdū* from Fallon and Platts that I have discussed at length.

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, though he too seems to have ultimately swum with the current, as we saw in the beginning of the previous chapter. 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'.<sup>39</sup> Speaking in Madras before the Dakshin Bhārat Hindī Prachār Sabhā, 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'.<sup>40</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup>Premchand, *Sāhitya kā uddeshya*, p. 108.

<sup>40</sup>Premchand, *Sāhitya kā uddeshya*, p. 124. I am grateful to Professor Ja'far Razā of the University of Allahabad for drawing my attention to these texts of Premchand.



### Chapter Three: Beginning, Then Going Away From Home

Urdu literature perhaps began with Mas'ūd Sa'd Salmān Lāhorī (1046-1121). Nothing survives of the 'Hindī' *divān* that he is reported to have put together. We know about it from Muḥammad 'Aufī's *Lubāb ul-albāb* (Pure Essences of the Intellectuals). Composed in Sindh around 1220-27, the *Lubāb* has this to say about Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān:

Although he was originally from Hamadan, yet since the polymathy of his work came to bloom and blossom in the cities of the East,...and he has been always known as a poet from these territories, his account has been given place in this category....The quantity of his verse is greater than that of all the poets, and he has three *divāns*: 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.<sup>1</sup>

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, and whether it could have been Panjabi. Ḳhusrau, writing a few decades after 'Aufī, makes it clear that various parts of India have independent languages of their own, and that these have been in existence since ancient times. So, if Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān had written in Panjabi, it is most likely that Muḥammad 'Aufī would have said so.

In his *masnavī* called *Nūh sipihr* (Nine Heavens), written in 1317-18, Ḳhusrau devoted a whole long section to India.

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<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad 'Aufī, *Lubāb ul-albāb*, p. 423. See also the older Browne edition (Leyden / London 1903), part 2, pp. 246-252.

Placing the 'Indian speech' above Persian and Turkish because of its 'pleasing vocabulary,' *Ḳhusrau* went on to say:

/In short, it's quite without purpose  
To try and gain the heart's pleasure and song  
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, Kashmīrī, Kibar,  
Dhaur Samandarī, Tilangī, Gujar,  
Ma'barī, Gaurī, and the languages  
Of Bengal, Avadh, Delhi  
And its environs, all within  
Their own frontiers.  
All these are Indic [*hindvī*], and  
Are in common use  
For all purposes since antiquity.<sup>2</sup>

Scholars have found it difficult to identify the modern equivalents of these language names; *Vahīd Mirzā*, from whose edition I have drawn the text, does not gloss them. In any case, all the texts of the poem that I know have errors and misreadings, making the interpreter's task difficult. *Grierson*<sup>3</sup> relies on *Elliot*, who glosses the names as follows: Sindhī = Sindhi; Lāhorī = Panjabi; Kashmīrī = Dogri; Dhaur Samandarī = Kannada of Mysore; Tilangī = Telugu; Gujar = Gujarati; Ma'barī = Tamil of the Coromandel Coast; Gaurī = northern Bengali; Bangāl Avadh = Eastern Hindi; Delhi and its environs = western Hindi. Now there are many problems with this: (1) there's no reason to identify Kashmīrī as Dogri; (2) Kibar has not been glossed; (3) if Gaurī is northern Bengali, why does *Grierson* not mention it in his vast list of Indian languages in this very volume? (4) Why are Bengal and Avadh taken together? Bengal-Avadh is the name of no language, and

<sup>2</sup>*Ḳhusrau*, *Nūh sipihr*, pp. 179-80.

<sup>3</sup>*Grierson*, *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. 1, part I, page 1

Bengali proper cannot be 'Eastern Hindi', whatever that may be.

Here is what I understand from these names: Sindhī = Sindhi; Lāhorī = Panjabi; Kashmīrī = Kashmiri; Kibar = ??; Dhaur Samandarī should, I think, be Dvār Samundarī. Dvār Samudra was a kingdom in what is modern day Karnataka, with its capital in or near the city now known as Hāsan. (I am grateful to Professor N. R. Farooqī of the University of Allahabad for this information.) Hence Dhaur Samandarī = Kannada. Tilangī = Telugu; Gujar = Gujarati; Ma'barī = Tamil, because Malabar is an Indianisation of the Arabic *ma'bar*, 'crossing point.' (The southernmost tip of present-day Tamil Nadu was then the crossing point for Arab traders into Sarandīb (= Singhaladīp, or modern-day Sri Lanka). Gaurī = the language of the area called Gaur, now in the district of Malda in contemporary West Bengal. It would have been a language separate from Bengali, for *Ḳhusrau* lists Bengali separately. I suspect, however, that it could be a form of Marathi. The language of Gaur, in medieval Bengal, couldn't have been important enough to find a place in *Ḳhusrau*'s short list.

‘Ābid Peshāvarī quotes the authors of a small Urdu 'Dictionary of Errors' (*Qāmūs ul-aghlat*) as saying that Marathi is counted 'among Gaur languages'.<sup>4</sup> *Gopī Chand Nārang* glosses Kibar as Dogri, Dhaur Samandarī as Tamil, Ma'barī as Kannada. (This could be an unconscious switch.) He identifies Gaurī as Assamese, but doesn't cite his source, nor does he explain why the Assamese language should have been named after Gaur, which always was, and still is, in Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

*Gyān Chand* refers to a treatise on the grammar of 'Eastern Hindi' by Rudolf A. F. Hoernle. Published in 1880, this work was called *A Comparative Grammar of the Gaudian Languages with Special Reference to the Eastern Hindi, Accompanied by a Language Map and a Table of Alphabets*. According to *Gyān Chand*, Hoernle meant 'Indo-Aryan' by the term 'Gaudian'.

<sup>4</sup>‘Ābid Peshāvarī, *Gāhe gāhe bāz khvān*, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>*Nārang*, *Amīr Ḳhusrau kā hindavī kalām*, p. 29.

Grierson describes Hoernle's work as a 'masterpiece', but gives no explanation of the term 'Gaudian'.<sup>6</sup> Possibly the authors of *Qāmūs ul-aḡhlāt* were simply following Hoernle in describing Marathi as a 'Gaur' language. I consulted some noted Sanskritists of Allahabad about 'Gauri' and 'Gaurian', but drew a blank.

Grierson doesn't say anything about 'Gaur' languages, but does list 'Gavli', reported in the 1911 census as a form of Marathi, spoken in the district of Nasik.<sup>7</sup> Since the Marathi 'l' is pronounced somewhere between the English 'l' and the Urdu / Hindi retroflex 'r', it would have been quite possible for Khusrau to call it 'Gaur' (there being no retroflexes in Persian).

In the third from last line Khusrau has 'Hindvī', which I translate here as 'Indic', for Khusrau is identifying the native place, not the appellative, of the languages in question. Suniti Kumar Chatterji has pointed to the fact that

a new style or form of this Common Indo-Aryan, as it was spoken around Delhi, as '*Hindustani*' or '*Urdu*', ... (or the Indo-Aryan speeches) of North India, in their *ensemble* or totality, came to be known to non-Indians from the West, simply as the Hindu or the Indian Speech (Hindawī, Hindūi, or Hindwī). Even this *Indian* (*Hindwi*, *Hindi*) *Speech* at first did not have a specialised sense.... This incorrect and ignorant extension of a loose name helped to establish the idea, particularly during the last half a century (and in a special way, during the quarter of a century and more after India's Independence), that 'Hindi' was a Single Speech.<sup>8</sup>

Thus when Khusrau here describes Bengali, Tamil, and other Indian languages as '*Hindvī*', he simply means 'of India.' He does not mean that all these languages have only the common name 'Hindvī'.

In any case, one can see that Khusrau distinguishes Lāhorī (= Panjabi) from other languages like Avadhi, and from the

<sup>6</sup>Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup>Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 450.

<sup>8</sup>Chatterji, *India: A Polyglot Nation*, pp. 36-37. Italics and capitals are the author's.

*muṣṭalah* ('specific speech') of Delhi and its surrounds. Earlier, in the magnificent *Dibāchah* (Preface) to his *divān* called *Ġhurraṭ ul-kamāl* (The New Moon of Perfection), finished about 1294, Khusrau 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 *Divāns*' that emphasized his own supremacy: 'Before this, none of the sovereigns of poetry has had three *divāns*, except for me, who am the Cosroe of the lands of poetry. Although Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān does have three *divāns*, he has them in Arabic, Persian, and Hindvī'.<sup>9</sup>

How one wishes Khusrau 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 Khusrau. But this also raises a question: what happened between the times of Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān (1046-1121) and Khusrau (1253-1325)? It is a full two centuries, and if the two greatest poets of the eleventh-twelfth and thirteenth-fourteenth centuries wrote in Hindvī, why nobody else? The question also arises, why are the Hindvī works of Salmān and Khusrau not preserved? To these we may add yet another question: why is it nearly another century before we next hear of literary production in Hindī / Hindvī?

<sup>9</sup>Khusrau, *Dibāchah*, pp. 63-64.

For the known names after ẖhusrau are Shaikh Bājan (1388-1506), who wrote in Gujarat, and Faḫr-e Dīn Nizāmī (fl.1434); who wrote in the Deccan.

The reason for the non-survival of ẖhusrau's Hindvī seems to be that he didn't write much in it, and didn't consider it worth saving. As he himself said, he wrote a few quires of Hindvī verse, for presentation to his friends.<sup>10</sup> Shiblī, on the strength of Auḫadī Kirmānī's *taẓkirah* called 'Arafāt, says that ẖhusrau's output in 'Braj Bhāshā' is equal in quantity to his Persian, which is estimated at four to five hundred thousand lines, prose and verse put together. In another place Shiblī has the same Auḫadī reference, but there he says 'Hindī' instead of 'Braj Bhāshā'. It is possible that Shiblī was misremembering, for he seems to have relied much on memory, and that Auḫadī actually said 'Hindvī'. There is no indication anywhere so far that ẖhusrau wrote in any Indian language other than Hindvī, or that he wrote much in it either.<sup>11</sup> Auḫadī would seem to be exaggerating. In *Nūh sipīhr*, written nearly twenty-five years later, ẖhusrau claimed some knowledge of Sanskrit, but said nothing about his being a poet in Hindvī.<sup>12</sup> So one would be justified in assuming that ẖhusrau's Hindvī didn't survive because there wasn't much of it, and he didn't set much store by it anyway.

The reason why ẖhusrau 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 a light-hearted, for-the- nonce kind of 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; and we do not know anything about the size of his *divān* either. For all one knows, it may have just qualified to be

<sup>10</sup>In view of this, the unauthenticated stories narrated by Muḫammad Ḥusain Āzād in *Āb-e ḥayāt* (pp. 88-94) about ẖhusrau's composing Hindvī verses extemporaneously, in response to casual requests, gain some credence.

<sup>11</sup>Shiblī Nu'mānī, *Shi'r ul-'ajam*, vol. 2, pp. 133, 137-38.

<sup>12</sup>ẖhusrau, *Nūh sipīhr*, p. 181.

called a *divān*, and may not have amounted to much in size. It may even have been regarded as an embarrassing oddity by his Persianate admirers. The Ghaznavid sage and poet Sanā'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.<sup>13</sup> This of course raises the question, why did Salmān write in Hindvī if it wasn't a literary language at that time, and why is it that Hindvī was not a literary language then?

I believe that Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān wrote in Hindvī to demonstrate his virtuosity—not an uncommon practice in medieval literary culture in the Middle Eastern and the Indo-Muslim milieus. Even as recently as late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we have the Urdu poet Inshā'allāh ẖhān Inshā (1756/57-1817) writing his journal, though for a few weeks and clearly for public consumption, in Chaghatay Turkish, a language that very few Indians knew at that time. Also, his *divān* has poems in which are interspersed *shi'rs* composed by him in many languages: Arabic, Chaghatay Turkish, Panjabi, Kashmiri, and so on.<sup>14</sup> Clearly, Inshā, in writing these texts of extremely limited practical value, is giving way to a poetic exuberance, and an impulse of fine excess. Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān wrote in Arabic for the same reason. As to the reason why Hindvī did not become a literary language by the time Mas'ūd Sā'd Salmān or even ẖhusrau wrote, the answer lies in Sufi practices, as we shall see later.

The first person whose Hindvī survives in substantial quantity, and with whom Urdu literature can seriously be said to begin, is Shaikh Bahā ud-Dīn Bājan (1388-1506). His grandfather came from Delhi, and settled in Ahmedabad. Shaikh Bājan was born in Ahmedabad, worked in Gujarat, and described his language on different occasions as 'Hindī',

<sup>13</sup>Lewis, *Reading, Writing, and Recitation*, pp. 130-37.

<sup>14</sup>Na'im ud-Dīn, *Inshā kā turkī roznāmchah*; see also 'Ābid Peshāvarī, *Inshā'allāh ḫhān inshā*, pp. 655-75, and Inshā, *Kulliyāt*.

'Dihlavi', and 'Hindvī'.<sup>15</sup> People, mainly army men and civil servants, first came to Gujarat in large numbers from the North in 1297, when 'Alā ud-Dīn Ḳhaljī (r. 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 the time of Shaikh Bājan, there was a considerable population of Dihlavī-speakers in Gujarat. A major Sufi of that part of the country, Shaikh Bājan collected some of his Persian and Hindī prose and verse in an anthology that he called *Khazā'in-e rahmatullāh* (Treasures of Divine Mercy and Compassion)<sup>16</sup> after his mentor, Shaikh Raḥmatullāh. In it, he included Hindī / Hindvī poems in a verse genre called *jikrī* (after the Arabic *zīkr*, 'remembering'). It was a genre apparently much used in fourteenth-century Delhi, too.<sup>17</sup> Shaikh Bājan explained,

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.<sup>18</sup>

The Shaikh 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

<sup>15</sup>Sherānī, *Maqālāt-e sherānī*, vol. 1, pp. 166-68; Zaidi, *A History of Urdu Literature*, p. 47; Madanī, *Sukhanvarān-e gujarāt*, pp. 65-68.

<sup>16</sup>Zahīr ud-Dīn Madanī (*Sukhanvarān-e gujarāt*, pp. 49-50) gives the name as *Khāzanah-e rahmatullāh*, and even as *Khazānah-e rahmat*. He worked from a manuscript in the library of the Jāma' Masjid, Burhanpur. Jamīl Jalībī, who worked from another manuscript in the library of the Anjuman Taraqqī-e Urdū, Karachi, gives the name of the same text as *Khazā'in-e rahmatullāh (Tāriḳh-e adab-e urdū*, vol. 1, pp. 106-07), which I think is more acceptable.

<sup>17</sup>Sherānī, *Maqālāt-e sherānī*, vol. 1, p. 176.

<sup>18</sup>Jalībī, *Tāriḳh-e adab-e urdū*, vol. 1, p. 107.

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 the native land, is also a notable theme.

The quality of Shaikh 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.

Jainites, 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?<sup>19</sup>

The above is a translation of a complete poem, comprising fifteen *shī'rs* (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

<sup>19</sup>Madanī, *Sukhanvarān-e gujarāt*, pp. 66-67; Sherānī, *Maqālāt-e sherānī*, vol. 1, p. 169. While neither text can be said to be perfect, Madanī's is better.

or sweetness of life left in them, fit only for burning) enlivens the utterance and raises its level substantively. One important point is that while the poems are mostly spare in the use of words, they pack a lot of meaning. The language itself seems to possess this characteristic, recalling Edward Terry's observation quoted above about 'Indostan': that it 'speaks much in few words'.<sup>20</sup> 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.

One last point to be noted is that in the text as given by Sherānī, the poem has a descriptive title, in Persian: 'And this hymn has been composed in the Hindvī language'.<sup>21</sup> Madanī gives no title here, but includes this, and a number of other poems of which the title is simply 'Gujrī'.

Like nearly all poetry in the Indian Sufi tradition, Shaikh Bājan's embodies the Islamic worldview as coloured 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 Daryā'ī (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 'Abd ul-Quddūs Gangohī (1455-1538), called themselves 'Kabīr Dās' and 'Alakh Dās' respectively for the same reason.<sup>22</sup>

An interesting and somewhat similar case is that of Rājā Rām, who is famous (along with Benī Parshād) in Gujarat as one of two Hindu poets who wrote in Gujrī in the ancient times; Madanī says that it was also rumoured about Rājā Rām that he converted to Islam. Madanī himself long believed the two poets to be merely legendary, until quite by chance he

<sup>20</sup>See Chapter One, note 2.

<sup>21</sup>Sherānī, *Maqālāt-e sherānī*, vol. 1, p. 169.

<sup>22</sup>Jalībī, *Tārīkh-e adab-e urdū*, vol. 1, p. 113.

discovered a manuscript *divān* of Rājā Rām. Though incomplete, it has sufficient material to establish the fact that Rājā Rām did exist. Madanī believes that Rājā Rām came from Surat, flourished in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and may have converted to Islam. In regard to the last point, a judgement based on the poetry--and that's all we have at present--could go either way: Rājā Rām was a Hindu writing in a basically Muslim idiom, or he was a Muslim, but adopted a Hindu name either as a gesture of solidarity with the majority population, or because he saw truth as transcending matters of name and address.<sup>23</sup>

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 *Baḥr ul-fazā'il*, a Persian dictionary compiled in Gujarat by Faḥl ud-Dīn Muḥammad bin Qavvām bin Rustam Balkhī. 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'.<sup>24</sup>

By the time of Qāzī Maḥmūd Daryā'ī (1415-1534), and Shaikh 'Alī Muḥammad Jīv Gāmdhanī (d.1565), the names Hindvī / Dihlavī seem generally to have been given up in favour of Gujrī. In his Preface to the Shaikh's Hindvī poems called *Javāhir-e asrārullāh* (Gems of the Mysteries of God), Sayyid Ibrāhīm, pupil and grandson of the Shaikh, wrote: 'Shaikh 'Alī Muḥammad...having filled his heart with true gemstones and pearls, strung them in the string of poetry, recited his revelations and subtle points with his pearl-discovering and gem-scattering tongue, and collected them in words of Gujrī, and modes of verse'.<sup>25</sup>

The language name 'Hindī' does not appear to have been used in *Javāhir-e asrārullāh*. Yet it does not seem to have entirely disappeared from Gujarat, and in fact, seems to have existed side by side with Gujrī for a long time. A *maṣnavī*

<sup>23</sup>Madanī, *Sukhanvarān-e gujarāt*, pp. 93-96.

<sup>24</sup>Sherānī, *Maqālāt-e sherānī*, vol. 1, pp. 102-131, 161.

<sup>25</sup>Quoted by Sherānī, *Maqālāt-e sherānī*, vol. 1, p. 181.

called *Tārīkh-e gharībī*, 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 Qur'ān, 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.<sup>26</sup>

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 Faḥr-e Dīn Nizāmī, whose *maṣnavī* has been tentatively named *Kadam rā'o padam rā'o* because the only extant manuscript of the poem doesn't have a name. Internal evidence shows it to have been composed circa 1421-34. It is a poem of great length; the extant manuscript has 1032 *shī'rs* (2064 lines). Since the manuscript is incomplete, the complete poem must have been even longer. Sayyidah Ja'far says that there are indications in the poem to the effect that there were other long poems in Dakani before this.<sup>27</sup>

The language of *Kadam rā'o padam rā'o* is dense and difficult to understand. It certainly sounds more alien than that of Bājan. The reason perhaps is the poet's heavy preference for Telugu, Kannada, a bit of Marathi, and a good bit of *tatsam*-Sanskrit vocabulary over Persian; though unlike Bājan, who didn't use Persian metre much, Nizāmī composed his poem in a mainline Persian metre, used quite carefully. Nizāmī is not a better poet than Shaikh Bājan, but he tells his story reasonably well. This lends support to Ja'far's view that there were other poems before *Kadam rā'o padam rā'o*; an effective narrative.

<sup>26</sup>Sherānī, *Maqālāt-e sherānī*, vol. 2, p. 249.

<sup>27</sup>Gyān Chand and Sayyidah Ja'far, *Tārīkh-e adab-e urdū*, p. 14.



method would not ordinarily have been possible without the poet having models of Dakani verse narrative before him:

/Kadam Rā'ō 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/.<sup>28</sup>

There is just one manuscript of the poem, now in the library of the Anjuman Taraqqī-e Urdū, Karachi. The poem is very hard to read, even with the help of the facsimile of the original printed by Jālibī with his text. 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.

<sup>28</sup>Nizāmī, *Kadam rā'ō padam rā'ō*, pp. 91-93.

