

Cāndāyan is the pioneer work in a series of Sufi love-narratives, the *Masnavīs*, composed in India. The Indo-Sufi *Masnavī* genre continued to flourish for over 500 years, resulting in a substantial volume of very rich literature. In the unique position of being the pioneer work of the Indo-Sufi *Masnavī* genre, *Cāndāyan* served as a model for the subsequent *Masnavīs*, such as Kutuban's *Mrgāvafī* and Jayasī's *Padmāvat*. In the Mahakoshal region of India, *Canainī*, a pastoral folk-tale also known as *Lorikāyan*, was very popular. Maulana Daud based his *Cāndāyan* on this oral epic. Lorik lives in Govar, a town on the banks of the Ganges river, with his wife Mainā. One day he catches a glimpse of Cāndā, the princess of Govar, and falls in love with her. Cāndā also loves Lorik, and both elope to be able to live together.

After many adventures, Lorik and Cāndā return back to Govar to live with Lorik's family.

Until recently it was believed that the Sufi love narratives of India were sub-standard works, not quite representative of the Indian morals, and did not meet the Indian literary standards. Consequently, for years, the Hindi *Masnavī* literature remained neglected. This study opens a window into the true nature of the *Masnavī*, and invites the reader to take a new look at the Indo-Sufi *Masnavī* genre and determine its rightful place in the history of Hindi literature.

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