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Chapter LXXI

THE SILVER LINING
DEVELOPMENT OF THE URDU LANGUAGE, GRAMMAR, AND LITERATURE

A

Rekhtah, Hindi, Hindwi, Zubān-i Dilhi, Gujri, Zubān-i Urdū-i Mu'alla—all these names[1] were given to Urdu at the various stages of its progress by the Muslim rulers of and other settlers in India. It was also called "the language of the Moors."[2] The name Hindustani[3] popularized by the Europeans was also used by some writers in the early period.

[1] Maḥmūd Khān Shairāni, *Panjab men Urdu*, 1st edition, pp. 1–23.

[2] *Hobson Jobson*, 1903, p. 417.

[3] Wajhi in his prose book *Sab-Ras* (c. 1040/1630) calls it *Zubān-i Hindustān*. Cf. *Sab-Ras*, Anjuman Taraqqi-i Urdu, 1932, pp. 11, 16.

Here, it would be interesting to trace the origin of the word "Urdu" and briefly give its history. Urdu is a word of Turkish origin, found in the earlier literature in various forms, such as *Ourda*, *Ourdah*, *Ourdou*, and *Urdu*, and means "camp," "alighting place," "army post," "an army," or a "part thereof." It also means tent, camp bazaar, fort, or a royal place (cf. *Nūr al-Abṣār*, MS. in the library of Dr. Muḥammad Shafī', Lahore). After undergoing several changes the word filtered into Persian books after the Mongol invasion of Iran. After the invasion of Eastern Europe by Bātu Khān it also entered into the languages of Europe.

It was, perhaps, Bābur who introduced the word "Urdu" into India, and during the reign of Akbar it was used as a term for the royal camp or the royal mint. During the subsequent periods, we find the usage of *Urdū-i Mu'alla* for the residential quarters belonging to Government officers (civil area) and *Urdu Bāzār* (the market attached to this area).

It is generally admitted that the word "Urdu" as the name of a particular language is associated with one of these two later expressions. That is to say, Urdu meant the language of the royal camp. But it would be wrong to assume on the basis of this fact that the Urdu language took its origin during the period of Shāh Jahān. The term "Urdu" in this special sense appears to have been in vogue since the time of Aurangzīb. Actually it came into being soon after the invasion of India by Muslims from the North. Shāh Murād of Lahore was perhaps the first writer who used the word "Urdu" for the language itself in one of his letters written in 1196/1782. The other early writers who used this word for the language were Muṣḥafi (1211/1796) and Gilchrist (1194/1780).

In a way, Urdu is not exclusively the creation of the Muslims. Its birth is the direct result of their contact with the Hindus, who jointly with the former have developed it down to recent times. The contribution of the Muslims to its development is, however, more substantial, rather monumental, as compared with that of the Hindus or the Europeans[4] who also played a creditable role in its advancement. Considered from the point of view of quantity as well as quality, spirit as well as atmosphere, Urdu is predominantly a language of the Muslims, although the services of the other co-workers in the field can in no case be under-rated.

Urdu was popularized by Muslim mystics and saints and patronized by Muslim kings and rulers. Some of the Muslim emperors, kings and princes[5] themselves composed Urdu verses and compiled *dīwāns* of Urdu poems. Its literature was enriched from Islamic sources. The Muslims, therefore, were mainly, though not exclusively, the architects of this language.

Let us now assess and determine the nature and extent of Muslim contribution to the creation and development of Urdu. Urdu took its shape first in

[4] Ram Babu Saksena, *History of Urdu Literature*, 1927, p. 4.

[5] For instance Muḥammad Quli Quṭub Shāh, Shāh 'Ālam Āftāb, Bahādur Shāh Ẓafar, Wājid 'Ali Shāh Akhtar, etc.

the Punjab and Delhi during the Ghaznawid and the early Sulṭānate period[6] when the first powerful commingling of Hindu-Muslim cultures occurred, causing a productive intermixture of Muslim (i.e., Persian, Turkish, and Arabic) languages with *Prākrits* (the *Apabhraṇṣa* of the Punjab and the *Khari Boli* of Delhi, Meerut,[7] and the adjoining areas) of Northern India.

This situation had its effect in two directions. First, it created a hybrid form of speech used by Hindus and Muslims in the bazaars with a sprinkling of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words; subsequently, it developed into a crude vehicle of lyrical utterances (cf. Amīr Khusrau's *Rekhtahs*). Secondly, it caused an infiltration of Hindi words into Arabic and Persian books on the one side and of Persian and Turkish words into Hindi books on the other. The *Kitāb al-Ṣaidanah* of al-Bīrūni and the early lexicographical works in Persian written in India contain a large number of Hindi words and idioms, and Chand's *Prithvi Rāj Rāsa*[8] and, later, *Ād Granth* of Nānak embody large materials drawn from Muslim sources.[9]

But, apart from this linguistic fusion, a distinct language came into being with the passage of time as an admixture of Persian and Arabic words and expressions in use more in Muslim circles, with a clear bias towards Muslim cultural modes and attitudes. Persian enjoyed the status of the Court language, but side by side with it this new language too kept on progressing from one stage to another.

From Delhi, this new language reached Gujerat and the Deccan where its growth and initial popularity awakened the first serious literary activities under the 'Ādilshāhi and Quṭbshāhi rulers,[10] some of whom were themselves good poets of Urdu. Earlier, the Sufis[11] employed this polyglot for their missionary work and wrote religious and mystic treatises in it. Gradually, it attained a literary status in the South before it was employed by writers in the North, where in due course it became popular during the post-Aurangzīb

[6] Maḥmūd Khān Shairāni, *op. cit.* (Mu'īn al-Adab edition), p. 3; Mas'ūd Ḥusain Khān, *Tārīkh-i Zubān-i Urdu*, p. 139.

[7] Sabzwāri, *Urdu Zubān ka Irtiqā'*, 1956, p. 87, says: "Urdu and Pāli come from common source." He asserts that Urdu does not come from Surāseni Apabhraṇṣa, or Braj, or Haryāni, or Bundeli, nor from Punjābi (*ibid.*, p. 86). Pundit Kaifi, *Kaifiyyah*, p. 31, thinks that Amīr Khusrau's *Rekhtahs* were in Apabhraṇṣa of Surāseni Prākrit: also see Saksena, *op. cit.*, pp. 2 *sqq*. Al-Bīrūni visited the Punjab during the early Ghaznawid period. The "local" words used by him in his *Kitāb al-Ṣaidanah* are called by him al-Hindīyyah—apparently synonymous with the "Punjab" Apabhraṇṣa; cf. S. M. Abdullah, "'Arabi Taṣānīf men Hindustāni Alfāẓ," *Oriental College Magazine*, May 1943.

[8] Shairāni doubts its period, *op. cit.*, p. 121. Also see Mas'ūd Ḥusain Khān, *op. cit.*, pp. 115 *sqq*., who thinks that some parts of it must have been written during the early Ghulāmān period.

[9] S. M. Abdullah, *Fārsi men Hindū'on ka Ḥiṣṣah*, Anjuman Taraqqi-i Urdu, pp. 277–89.

[10] Naṣīr al-Dīn Hāshmi, *Deccan men Urdu*, 1926, pp. 16, 40 *seq*.

[11] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Urdu ki Taraqqi men Ṣūfiyā' ka Ḥiṣṣah*, 1939, pp. 4 *seq*.

period, during which Ḥātim, Mīr, Sauda, Dard, and others wrote excellent poetry in it. Then the centre shifted to Lucknow and other places, till in 1215/1800, the Fort William College was established by the British at Calcutta where deliberate efforts were made to simplify Urdu style under the name of Hindustāni, which encouraged a revival of interest in secular, non-communal, and local aspects of its literature.

These efforts, however, did not succeed fully because Urdu had already assumed a specific shape and complexion more akin to Persian and other Muslim literatures, and it was not then possible to divest it of its predominantly Muslim stamp. They, in a way, encouraged parting of the ways, and led to the creation of the modern Hindi with a distinct Hindu spirit drifting largely away from Urdu and the "lingua franca" Hindustāni. So, by 1303/1885, Urdu, which was hitherto a common language of the Hindu-Muslim intelligentsia, came to be claimed as a language, more or less, of the Muslims. About the same time, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān advocated this claim simultaneously with the declaration of the Muslims to exist as a separate politico-cultural group in India and the issue was thus decided once for all. Later, the protection and preservation of Urdu became one of the basic grounds for demanding a separate homeland for the Muslims.

B

This brief history would prove the fact of active association of the Muslims with Urdu since its origin, though not to the exclusion of other communities (Hindus and Europeans) whose contribution to its progress is certainly creditable. For a considerable time the Hindus took keen interest in the advancement of Urdu as if it were their own language. It attracted their enthusiasm due to the spirit of catholicity existing in its mystic poetry, taste for which had already been cultivated by them through Persian which had become a part of their education ever since the reign of Akbar.[12] With the intensification of the communal consciousness, however, certain sections of the Hindus created a gulf between Hindi and Urdu which went on increasing till the country was partitioned and the shape of things changed altogether.

The Europeans played their role a bit differently. They used Urdu for official purposes, simplified it for common use, compiled dictionaries and grammars[13]—and patronized it so long as it served their ends.

[12] S. M. Abdullah, *Fārsi men Hindū'on ka Ḥiṣṣah*, pp. 4 *seq*.

[13] The first grammar of Urdu was written perhaps by J. J. Koetler ('Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Qawā'id-i Urdu*, 1951, Preface, pp. 11 *seq*.) and Inshā' was the first "local" writer who dealt with problems of Urdu grammar in *Daryā-i Laṭāfat*. It may, however, be noted that some preliminary discussions are also found in the *Muthmir* (MS. University of the Panjab) of Khān Ārzu (a writer of Muḥammad Shāh period). Among several European writers and poets, Dr. Gilchrist, John Shakespeare, Fallen, Fransu, and Hederly Āzād were the notable scholars who produced books in Urdu; Garcin de Tassy may also be considered to be among those who wrote about Urdu.

Principally, therefore, Urdu has been a concern and creation of the Muslims; but from another point of view it is positively a joint production of the Hindus and the Muslims (although its distinct bias towards Islamic culture can never be denied).

C

Now about Urdu composition and grammar. It is agreed that whatever form Urdu took ultimately, it is essentially an Indian language which developed on the grammatical pattern of Sureseni *Prākrits*. Therefore, it follows the same rules of grammar as any other branch of this group, and its basic alphabet is also the same. But the complete Urdu alphabet is richer and is a combination of Hindi and Arabic-Persian sounds. In certain cases the Hindi sounds have been softened and in certain others amplified according to the phonetic rules of Persian and Urdu.[14]

Urdu is, therefore, a more advanced language than the *Prākrits* so far as sounds and vocabulary are concerned. It has borrowed a large number of nouns and adjectives from other Muslim languages, in addition to the recent borrowings from European languages. Most of the verbs, pronouns, and prepositions belong to Hindi but the structure of the sentence has been very much determined by Persian.

The main Muslim contributions to Urdu grammar are: adoption of Arabic terminology, application of the rules of word formation (in plurals and adjectival compounds), and introduction of the Persian *kasrah-i iḍāfat* (vowel mark "i" to denote possession) instead of its Hindi form *kā, kī, kē*.

During certain periods of strong Persian influences, even the sentence scheme was made to follow the Persian sentence arrangement. Conversely, however, certain Arabic and Persian plurals (like many other words) also underwent change according to the Hindi usage,[15] particularly in the early Urdu literature.

These modifications in the grammatical structure of Urdu have been of benefit to it in several ways. The *kasrah-i iḍāfat* has the advantage of economy over Hindi *kā, kī, kē*. The Persian compounds *(murakkabāt)* also have the same value, with additional rich rhythmic properties, so useful in paragraphs and stanzas. Conciseness in lyrical utterances too has always been a favourite mode of expression with the Muslims—accomplished mostly by the use of *kasrah-i iḍāfat* and "concise compounds," although these features have sometimes been misused in the form of "dead" adjectival compounds or unnecessary "Arabicized" plurals. And it is a relief to find that the Persianized sentence structure of Urdu composition has particularly vanished with the advent of the Western literary influences.

[14] Sabzwāri, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 *sqq.* and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Qawā'id-i Urdu*, pp. 4–9.

[15] Shairāni's article: "Sab-Ras," *Oriental College Magazine*, November 1934, and "Introduction to Dīwānzādah Ḥātim" (MS. University of the Panjab).

In the course of centuries, Urdu borrowed[16] thousands of words and phrases (nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctive prepositions) from Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Pashtu,[17] as it did also from European languages[18] on a limited scale. The *Farhang-i Āṣfīyyah* contains 7,584 Arabic, 6,041 Persian, 17,505 Urdu, and 21,644 Hindi (plus European) words. These figures have further changed due to the recent coinage of terms[19] (technical and literary) and infiltration of more Arabic (religious) words under the influence of the revivalist movement of Pakistan.

It may be noted that this Persian-Arabic vocabulary in Urdu is not merely a "dead" equivalence; it represents an extension and enrichment of experience. It reflects a new attitude to life and a peculiar tone and colour, not present in other Indian languages.

The Urdu language combines the virility and vigour of Turkish, the grandeur and dignity of Arabic, the polish and grace of Persian, in addition to the original homeliness of Hindi expressions. This has made Urdu richer in tone-colour and literary effects, so very important for a perfectly expressive style.

The incorporated Arabic-Turkish-Persian vocabulary in Urdu belongs to the various departments of life: administration, social activity, agriculture, art, religion,[20] literature, etc., and represents a gradual expansion of culture in India caused by the fresh wave of life awakened by the vigorous Muslim spirit, following in the wake of immigrations from Iran and Tūrān.

Urdu also borrowed in literary artistry. It adopted the Arabic-Persian prosody for metrical scansion, but rarely did it employ the Hindi *Pingal*, except during the recent periods when 'Aẓmat Allah Khān and other song-writers have attempted to revive Hindi metres.

We may now refer to the development of literary style, first in accordance with the Persian patterns, and afterwards based on the European (mostly English) models. All the reform movements in Urdu literature (before 1857) were invariably directed to achieve, first, the closest approximation of Urdu to the Persian literary forms of expression, and, secondly, the effective adjustment of the language to the *rūz marrah* and *muḥāwarah* (i.e., the natural speech of men). Thus, although the reformers insisted on every-day spoken language and discarded phonetically and rhetorically incongruous words, yet in order to achieve true literary beauty they always advocated the adoption of pictorially, musically, and emotionally proper Persian and Arabic words. From Wali and Ḥātim down to Nāsikh and Dhauq, the same

[16] Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād, *Āb-i Ḥayāt*, 14th edition, pp. 27 *sqq.*, and Aḥmad Dīn's *Sargudhasht-i Alfāẓ*, 1932, pp. 137 *sqq.*, and 236 *sqq.*; also see 'Abd al-Majīd Sālik's *Muslim Thaqāfat Hindustān Men*, 1st edition, pp. 515 *sqq.*

[17] Imtiāz 'Ali 'Arshi, *Oriental College Magazine*, May 1948, pp. 28.

[18] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, "Dakhīl Alfāẓ," *Urdu*, July 1949, pp. 15 *sqq.*

[19] Waḥid al-Dīn Salīm, *Waḍi' Iṣṭilāḥāt-i 'Ilmīyyah*, 1931, pp. 7 *sqq.*

[20] For the influence of Islam on Urdu poetry, see I'jāz Ḥusain, *Madhhab-o Shā'iri*, 1955, pp. 66 *sqq.* Also see Āzād, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 *sqq.*

process of assimilation continued. The literary ideals of Persians became the main goals to be reached by Urdu writers, and they remained so till the literary taste changed in modern times.

The distinctive characteristics of the Persianized form of literary expression were: a tendency towards elaboration, affectation and floridity; sumptuousness of detail in the narrative; love of grandeur and grotesqueness; imaginativeness even when realistic delineation was required; preponderance of wit; and fondness for metaphor, allegory, and symbolism in poetry. Conciseness in lyrical poetry is another distinctive feature borrowed from the Persian *ghazal*. Simplicity and directness in style were later introduced by writers at the Fort William College and also by the poet Ghālib and the reformer Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān.

Sometimes, there is a touch of insincerity in the literary style of the Persian models, but these models when reformed have helped Urdu literary expression, to gain in force, vigour, and dignity of tone, rarely found in the sister languages of India.

D

In classical poetry, the chief forms—*ghazal*, *qaṣīdah*, *rubā'i*, *maṯhnawi*, etc.—were borrowed from Persian. *Ghazal*, a short poem of a few verses (commonly between seven and twelve), mainly devoted to love themes, interspersed with other subjects of philosophical and mystical nature, is essentially a lyrical form, insisting on conciseness, economy, and beauty of diction. In this form, each couplet is complete in itself but is interwoven into the whole, by means of a common rhyme and a common metre, and sometimes by an undercurrent of a common mood apparent in the tone though not necessarily in the subject. In Urdu as in Persian, *ghazal* attracted to its fold several great poets such as Wali, Mīr, Dard, Sauda, Muṣḥafi, Ātiṣḥ, Momin, Ghālib, and later Ḥāli, Iqbāl, Ḥasrat, and some of the prominent modern poets like Ḥafīẓ, Firāq, and Faiḍ (Faiz) who have adapted it to the changed mental atmosphere of the modern age.

Qaṣīdah (panegyric or praise-poem), a form more lengthy in size and more complex in structure and content, requires an unusual command over language and also great constructive ability. It may be noted that *qaṣīdah* is not confined to praise and that it has also been employed successfully for subjects of descriptive, narrative, dramatic, and subjective nature. The chief *qaṣīdah*-writers in Urdu are Nuzrati, Sauda, Inshā', and Dhauq, whose art in this particular branch can compete with that of the best *qaṣīdah*-writers in Persian, at least, in their care for the externalities of technique, if not for internal beauties. To this list, one may add Ghālib, who introduced some changes in the structure of *qaṣīdah*.

Another form is *maṯhnawi* which is originally meant for narration of a longer chains of events of historical or fictional nature, and is distinguished

from other forms in that each couplet in it has a separate rhyme in consonance with a uniformity in the metre scheme. The most outstanding *maṯhnawīs* in Urdu are those written by Mīr Taqi Mīr *(Daryā-i 'Iṣḥq)*, Mir Ḥasan *(Seḥr al-Bayān)*, Daya Shankar Nasīm *(Gulzār-i Nasīm)*, and Shauq Lakhnawi *(Zehr-i 'Iṣḥq)*.

Out of the remaining poetical forms, special reference seems necessary to *ṣḥehr āṣḥob*—a form used by Persian and Turkish writers, more or less for humorous themes but employed by the Urdu poets such as Mīr and Sauda for serious subjects of social and political import. Another very important branch of Urdu poetry is *marṯhīyah*, which derived its name from Arabic *riṯhā'* (elegy) and took a peculiar narrative shape in Urdu. It has some resemblance to epic forms and deals with the tragic events of Karbala (a place in Iraq where Imām Ḥusain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, and a small party of his kinsmen and followers, courageously fought against a much larger army deputed by Yazīd, an Umayyad ruler, and lost their lives). The prominent *marṯhīyah*-writers were Anīs and Dabīr whose *marṯhiyahs* are the best representatives of this art. Mirza Rafī' Sauda and Ḍamīr had also contributed to its progress earlier.

Reḳhti (poems, as though, written by women, with peculiar female attitudes towards love and with characteristically female ways of speech) means, literally, "the feminine form of *reḳhṯah*" (one of the names for Urdu, and later for Urdu poetry as a whole, or for Urdu *ghazal* alone). It is more or less in the nature of a "feminine" burlesque or parody of love-poems written by men. In most of such poems, the tone is non-serious, rather comic, sometimes bordering on licence and obscenity. The chief representative poets of this literary form are Rangīn and Jān Ṣāḥib, although its earliest specimens are also found in the Deccani period of Urdu poetry.

We may mention in passing the *rubā'i* (quatrain), the *musaddas* (Ḥālī's *Musaddas* being the most prominent), *wāsūḳhṯ* (ironical love-poems), *qiṭ'āt* (the fragmentary and episodic poems written more or less on the model of shorter *qaṣīdahs* or quatrains), and a few other forms such as *muḳhammas* (quintet), *mustazād*, etc. These forms were adopted from Persian and were employed by almost all the famous poets. Recently, the Hindi *gīt* and *doha* forms have been revived in Urdu by poets such as Ḥafīẓ, Maqbūl Aḥmadpuri, Mukhtār Ṣiddīqi, Jamīl 'Ali, and others, while some of the European forms have been given currency by 'Azmat Allah Khān, Faiḍ, Rāshid among many others whose poems deserve a high place in Urdu poetry for perfection of technique and construction.

In its emotional moods Urdu poetry differs from Hindi poetry despite the fact that some of its attitudes (e.g., towards the sex of the lover) and imagery in it were borrowed by Urdu poets in the Deccani period, and also to some extent in recent times, but the general atmosphere of Urdu poetry has been throughout Persian, except in the part produced under Western influences.

The most important poets of Urdu (Wali, Mīr, Sauda, Dard, Muṣḥafi,

Ātish, Mīr Ḥasan, Naẓīr, Ghālib, Ismā'īl, Ḥāli, Iqbāl, and others) are Muslims, but the contribution by Daya Shankar Nasīm, Shafīq Aurangābādi, Chakbast, Surūr, Maḥrūm, Firāq, Anand Narain Mulla, and others who are Hindus is equally creditable and cannot be ignored in any history of Urdu poetry.

The spirit of Urdu poetry like that of Persian poetry, when serious, is passionately lyrical; when mystical, deeply reflective; when humorous, intensely witty and at times ironical. Muslim narrative poetry in the classical period has rarely been realistic and its descriptions are more imaginative than real and objective. The poetry of the Hindu poets of Urdu could be somewhat different but they too followed in most cases the general spirit of Urdu poetry. In recent times, Firāq has tried to infuse a Hindu devotional spirit in it but his is a solitary instance. The modern Urdu poets have copied some Western models as well, but most of the original Persian forms still persist. Iqbāl, a unique literary figure in the Muslim world, has given a new meaning to the old forms and symbols, but the aura of his poetry is also patently Persian. Iqbāl is also responsible for giving Urdu poetry a deeply Islamic and philosophical colour.

Some Europeans too have written good Urdu poetry but none of them can be considered a first-rate poet, and none of them has introduced the European spirit into it. Nevertheless, Urdu poetry has recently received much inspiration from European (particularly English) models, and has accepted changes in content and tone, and, to a limited extent, in form. For instance, some attempts have been made, especially in most recent times, to employ free verse and blank verse for long and short-long poems, and to write sonnets and cantoes.

It is, however, in content that European influences are markedly noticeable. One might refer here to the national as well as the "nature" themes in modern Urdu poetry which clearly bear the European stamp both in attitude and in diction. The chief representatives of the national or political poetry are Ḥāli, Shibli, Akbar, Ẓafar 'Ali Khān, Chakbast, Iqbāl, Josh, Faiḍ, and certain other modern poets, while Ismā'īl Merathi, Meḥshar, Be-Naẓir, and some others who wrote for children, may be called the nature poets of Urdu. The classical Urdu poetry has in its own way dealt with nature also. Naẓīr Akbarābādi may be cited as the most prominent poet of this line.

The case of Urdu prose is the same as that of Urdu poetry so far as forms employed in the classical period are concerned. But the share of non-Muslims in prose is more noteworthy especially in literary history, *tadhkirah*-writing (biographical dictionaries of poets), and fiction. Saksena's *History of Urdu Literature* has so far been the best, and Siri Rām's *Khumkhānah*—a dictionary of poets—is a monumental work of considerable worth. In fiction, Sarshār, Prem Chand, and Krishn Chandr (among the moderns) and Nihāl Chand (among the old) occupy a conspicuous place. The vast "fiction literature" *(dāstān* and *ḥikāyat)* has borrowed largely from Sanskrit sources, as also from European channels so far as the novel and the short story are concerned.

E

Comparatively speaking, Urdu prose is of recent growth and most of the prose literature of old Persian atmosphere is rather undeveloped and is in a crude literary shape. From *Sab-Ras* (All-Juice), a mystical allegory translated from Persian by Wajhi (c. 1045/1635), up to *Bāgh-o Bahār* (The Flower Garden and the Flower Season), a tale of the four dervishes by Mīr Amman (c. 1217/1802), there is a big gap, except for *Nau Ṭarz-i Muraṣṣa'* which is an outstanding work of the Persian model and *Dāstān-i Rāni Kaitki* by Inshā' representing a new model. Then came Ghālib and Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Ḥāli, Shibli, and the modern prose-writers who enriched Urdu prose drawing much from European sources and wrote biographies, histories, essays, novels, stories, theological and philosophical works, and books of literary criticism and science. In Osmania University, quite a large number of European books have been translated into Urdu.

Here, it would be proper to bring out prominently the role of Ghālib and Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān in the development of Urdu prose style. It may be noted that the credit of simplifying the literary Urdu language for the first time, after it had become laborious, affected, and merely decorative under the influence of high-flown Persian style current in India during the earlier periods, goes to the prose-writers of the Fort William College, Calcutta (founded by the British East India Company in 1215/1800), such as Mīr Amman, Sher 'Ali Afsos, Ḥaidar Bakhsh Ḥaidari, and others. Yet the personal emotive prose of Ghālib with touches of wit and delightful irony (as reflected in his Urdu letters) and the natural style of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, reflected in all of his works particularly in his "Essays," broadened the possibilities of Urdu prose enabling it to become an effective vehicle, not only for literary expression but also for the expression of emotional, philosophical, or scientific content.

Sir Sayyid Aḥmad insisted, not only on simplicity, naturalness, and ease, but also on the purpose, truth, sincerity, and earnestness of the author. Again, while Ghālib is inimitable, Sir Sayyid tremendously influenced his age, especially the group of his associates in the Aligarh movement, such as Ḥāli, Shibli, Nadhīr Aḥmad, Dhakā' Allah and others who enriched Urdu literature abundantly by producing works of unusual merit on various subjects.

Side by side with these prose-writers, we find Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād, once Professor at the Government College and the Oriental College, Lahore. He was with Ḥāli a co-founder of the Natural School of Urdu poetry and was perhaps the most popular stylist of Urdu, even though he did not belong to the immediate circle of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān. He chose to write in a manner which, though not simple and direct, was yet expressive, rich, and graceful. The three main qualities of his prose are its beauty, artistry, and grandeur, and so far none has surpassed him in excellence. Some of his notable works are *Āb-i Ḥayāt* (a history of Urdu poetry), *Sakhundān-i Fāris*

(a history of Persian literature), *Nairang-i Khayāl* (a collection of essays), and *Darbār-i Akbari* (a history of the Emperor Akbar).

Drama is the weakest spot in Urdu literature and whatever exists in this branch has been borrowed from and inspired by the European models. Aḥsān Lakhnawi, Āgha Ḥashr, and Sayyid Imtiāz 'Ali Tāj are the most outstanding figures in this field.

Most of the writers of Urdu prose are Muslims. Hence, the general stylistic atmosphere is also the same as is associated with the Muslim genius.

The works on biography and Islamic history produced at Dār al-Muṣannifīn, Azamgarh (now in India), reflect an intensely Islamic spirit. Similarly, most of the works on socio-political subjects embody Muslim inclinations.

In the field of fiction, i.e., romances *(dāstān)*, novels and short stories, we witness a variety of tastes, because in these branches Muslims and non-Muslims have taken almost equal part, introducing new elements drawn from different sources, beautifully fused together.

The romances (or *dāstān-i adab*)[21] should naturally come first. This kind of literature is based on or adopted and borrowed from Arabic and Persian as well as from Hindi sources, and manifests a mixture of various racial and cultural elements. For instance, there is emphasis on nature and phantasy in stories of Sanskrit origin, on action and sensuality in stories of Arabic origin, on adventure and extravagance in stories associated with Tūrān and Khurāsān, on occultism and on fabulous and imaginative pleasure in those associated with Iran. The Hindu element in the *dāstāns* is also conspicuous, although the number of Hindu writers of *dāstān* is not so very large.

The atmosphere in earlier novels of Urdu, as represented by Nadhīr Aḥmad, Sharar, Ṭabīb, and Rāshid al-Khairi is predominantly Islamic, while local life has been depicted in the more modern novels (for instance, in the novels of Prem Chand) and in Urdu short stories, as represented by Manto, Krishn Chandr, Rajindar Bedi, 'Iṣmat Chaghtā'i and others, who under the influence of the Progressive Writers' movement have manifested the spirit of realism as fostered in European, particularly Russian, literature, and adapted it to the circumstances of indigenous life.

F

The recent trends in Urdu literary criticism are also directly inspired by the European critical theory and practice. The modern Urdu criticism manifests a clear departure from the old practical criticism, largely based on old rhetorics and stylistics, specimens of which are to be found mostly in *tadhkirahs* (biographical dictionaries of poets) and other stray writings.

Shibli, Ḥāli, Āzād, and Imdād Imām Athar were the first to reorientate Urdu criticism along new lines. They tried to apply the principles of European

[21] Cf. Giyan Chand, *Urdu ki Nathri Dāstānen*, 1954, p. 37.

criticism to classical Urdu and Persian literature, in a somewhat imperfect manner, for they could not get rid of their old inclinations and in practice had to rely on old standards. The *Muqaddimah* (Introduction) to poetry by Ḥāli, the *Shi'r al-'Ajam*, a history of Persian poetry by Shibli, *Āb-i Ḥayāt* (a history of Urdu poetry) by Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād, and *Kāshif al-Ḥaqā'iq* (The Revealer of Critical Principles) by Imdād Imām Athar are some of the noteworthy books on criticism belonging to the earlier period of modern influences. Later on, however, Urdu criticism made tremendous progress and fell in line with the more modern criteria of literary judgment. The notable figures in this field are Qādri, Zor, Athar, Niāz, Majnūn, Firāq, Āl-i Aḥmad Surūr, Iḥtishām Ḥusain, Kalīm al-Dīn Aḥmad, and a few others.

G

To summarize, Urdu is a joint achievement of several communities, but Muslim contribution to its creation and development is outstanding. The language is basically Indian but it developed largely in accordance with the Muslim (particularly Persian) genius and taste. The attitudes in the classical Urdu literature are mostly in tune with those existing in all Muslim literatures. Urdu is decidedly a wonderful manifestation of the synthetic capacity of the Muslims which succeeded in evolving out of heterogeneous elements a language which can now be regarded as one of the most powerful languages of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and one of the two official languages of Pakistan.

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